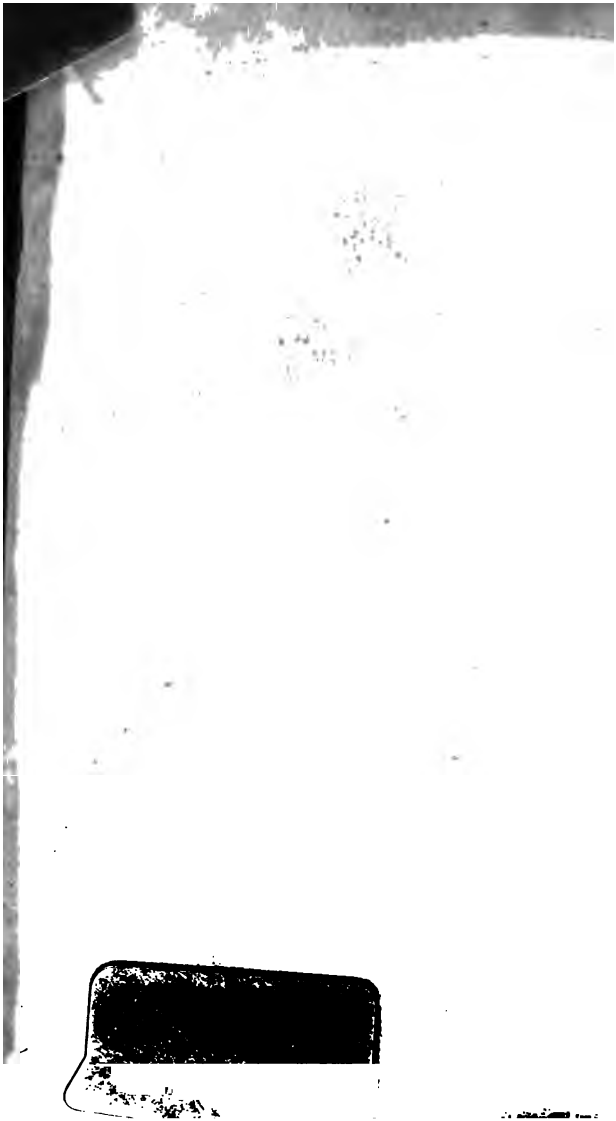

THE HERMIT OF THE ROCK.

VOL. I.

THE HERMIT OF THE ROCK;

OR, THE

HISTORY OF THE Marchioness De Lausanne, AND THE Comte De Luzy.

Translated from a French Manuscript.

In THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
Printed for F. Noble, at his Circulating Library in Holborn; and B. Desbrow, Successor to J. Noble, at his Circulating Library, in St. Martin's Court, near Leicester Square. 1779.

TO THE HONOURABLE

LADY PRISCILLA BERTIE.

IN addressing to Lady Priscilla Bertie the translation of a moral sentimental Novel, I secure it a kind reception from the world. That world which almost adores her, will, without considering the merits or demerits of the piece, read it with eagerness, if the name of Priscilla Bertie adorns the Dedication.

This, however, Madam, is not my motive for inscribing it to you—it is

not the mere selfish hope of this pie
meeting with favour from the sancti
of your name, that induces me to u
it on this occasion. No—I have a
superior reason. I admire your virtu
—I am charmed with your good ser
—I see no young woman of fashi
more estimable in any respect, th
the Dutchess of Ancaster's daught
She is not only the greatest beauty
our court—but, like her mother, s
is already famed for the amiableness
her conduct. I ambition that this wo
should be honoured by a dedication
it to her, and I flatter myself she wi
not disdain to become its Patroness.

In a convent in Paris where I w
educated—a friend of mine determine
to try her talent in this species
writing-

writing—never intending that it should be made public.—When it was finished, she presented it to me—and I find myself now, by the most unfortunate of events, at liberty to publish it without giving offence to the amiable and beloved writer of it.

In the course of the history, a few quotations were introduced by its writer from some *French* poets; but as they must have lost much of their beauty by a translation, I thought it best to substitute in their room such as were equally applicable from *English* poets: a choice, I hope, your Ladyship's judgment will not condemn.

However this work may have suffered in the translation, there is a moral in it which may yet be found unhurt

—and

ınd which is all, perhaps, that can
itle it to your Ladyſhip's favour.
:h as it is—I lay it at your feet,
l beg leave to ſubſcribe myſelf

Your Ladyſhip's

most obedient

and very ſincere admirer,

THE TRANSLATOR.

THE HERMIT OF THE ROCK.

VICTORIA *to* MARIA.

IT is done, my Maria—my word is irrevocably given—I have yielded to the commands of my father—to the too eloquent tears of my mother—and, on this day week, I am to be made the

wife of Lauſanne.—Luzy!—moſt amiable—moſt charming Luzy!—Heaven can witneſs with what ſentiments of truth and love I conſent to give you up for ever!—You will think I have wronged you—you will complain, with ſeeming juſtice on your ſide; yet Victoria denies the accuſation—her heart declares for *you*, my Luzy—but her duty undoes us both.

My God! would he not pity me, could he behold me a trembling victim, led an offering to the altar of avarice? —Could he be a ſpectator of thoſe tears —thoſe agonies that muſt accompany me on the day which yields me to the arms of Lauſanne—ah, my Maria!—Luzy would no longer reproach me as

the

the author of his wretchedneſs; he would let fall ſome drops of pity, and lament with me the auſterity of fate.

You will chide me, Maria, when you read thoſe impaſſioned lines—you will remind me of the rights that the Marquis will claim over me—you will tell me that I have aſſented to become his wife—and that Luzy muſt be thought of no more. Alas! you are right!—it will be a crime to think—to ſpeak of him, when once I have given my hand to another. But, ah! allow me time to tear him from my idea—ſuffer me, my Maria, to mention him before the fatal hour arrives, that is to place between us that cruel barrier, which will ſeparate us for ever. Deny me

not the consolation of repeating his loved name, while yet I can do it with innocence.—Be not too rigorous—I still prize my virtue beyond my love.

Do you remember when first I saw Luzy?—Do you remember the emotions which at that instant took possession of my bosom?—I knew not at the time what they meant—I had never experienced them before—and ah, my Maria! I have never felt them since:—how can I describe them?—they were too violent to be delightful—they were too exquisite to be imagined.

Surprize—confusion—joy—those were the most definable sensations—the rest must remain untold—my pen cannot do justice to them. Love for

the

the firſt time preſented itſelf before me—it ruſhed at once into my boſom: its approaches were violent, but it ſoon wore a milder and more pleaſing aſpect. This charming appearance captivated my reaſon, and bidding adieu to thoſe tumults which had at the beginning affected me, I loved with pleaſure, with gaiety, with compoſure. He looked at me—he viewed me with attention—my fearful eye ſunk under the piercing looks of Lauſanne, and bluſhes overſpread my face.

It was on a feaſt which my father annually gives his tenants, and which the young villagers call their rural ball.—Ah, I can never forget it! It was then I ſaw him—he was on a viſit to Madame

Du Parte—he came with her to join with us the happy throng. We were all habited like nymphs of Arcadia, and our dreſſes, my Maria, were emblems of our ſimplicity. He approached me—he aſked me to dance—I conſented willingly—his manner was the tendereſt—the moſt flattering—his eyes ſpoke a language I did not then underſtand—but which even at that time was delightful, and from that night Luzy became an object of my regard—ſhall I ſay too much if I own, of my moſt ardent *affection?* The character of the Comte was that of an amiable ſenſible man—his ſpirit was generous; his ſoul was as noble as his birth; and his heart was extolled for its excellence.

Luzy

Luzy was introduced to my father by Madame Du Parte, as a young nobleman in whom the graces and virtues combined—as an object who had created not only the admiration, but the esteem of courts; and my father ever found him a sincere friend, and most agreeable companion. I need not repeat more, my Maria—you know Luzy—you also know with what pains he undertook to make himself the conqueror of Victoria's heart—ah, were not those pains rewarded! He sighed for me alone—he seemed to regard me as the only being in the universe, who could give him happiness. My father—my mother beheld and heard his passion for me; and they encouraged him with

every hope of ſucceſs. The old Comte De Luzy reſides in Italy, and the time drew near when his ſon's preſence there would be neceſſary.—At length the day was fixed for his leaving us—it came too ſoon—he was about to bid us farewell—ah, what anguiſh tore my fond boſom at the idea of parting with him! He fell at my feet—he once more painted to me the ſincerity—the fervency of his love.—I liſtened—I wept—I wrung my hands.

"Ah!" cried he, "why all this grief?——why theſe contending tumults?"

"It is paſt," returned I, "thoſe hours of delight are paſt, my Luzy—and we ſhall behold them no more."

My

My prophetic ſoul—yes, Maria, my prophetic ſoul whiſpered too truly the miſeries I now feel. He bade me be of comfort—he ſwore to be faithful to me alone, and aſſured me his return ſhould be as ſoon as poſſible. On my part—I vowed to love no other man—I vowed no other ſhould ever poſſeſs my hand; we called down heaven as a ſolemn witneſs of all we uttered.—That heaven now beholds me on the verge of breaking through thoſe engagements which in its awful preſence I had made. Ah, my father!—ah, my mother! why all this tyranny? You ſaw my affection for Luzy—you encouraged it—and yet you have doomed me to ſelf reproach—to miſery—to Lauſanne!

How ſhall I impart the fatal tidings to Luzy?—Should I not juſtify myſelf to him?—Will he not hear it until he arrives in France?—My God, what will he think of me!—What will he not ſuppoſe!—Maria—my dear Maria—can there be a fate more wretched than mine? Why was I not born the happy daughter of ſome artleſs, ſome unaſpiring villager!—then ſhould I have married the man of my choice—then would the glare of ſuperfluous wealth have been diſregarded by my parents, and the honeſt worth of my ſhepherd have been the chief conſideration.—But whither does my pen carry me?—ah, duty!—to thee I ſacrifice—to thee I yield up every gleam of happineſs!—

let

let me not therefore dare to murmur against those parents to whom I have been so much obliged—but rather reflect, that by rebelling against their commands, I should render myself unworthy of subscribing, that I am the friend of my Maria.

VICTORIA DE CLARENCE.

VICTORIA *to* MARIA.

YOUR letter, my Maria, afforded me some comfort; and the tears I shed upon it eased my sad heart. —One thing in it, I will own I thought

ſevere. When you tell me that I *muſt learn to command thoſe feelings, which have hitherto rendered me too ſenſible of pleaſure and misfortune*; you ſurely forget that I poſſeſs not your judgment—your firmneſs—your philoſophy: ah, my friend! teach me to ſubdue this weak—this repining nature—point out to me thoſe paths in which your virtues have led you; and lend me your ſupporting hand to conduct me through them. Teach me to forget the amiable—the ſeducing Luzy—teach me to renounce thoſe fond ideas which have hitherto formed the baſis of my felicity—and, ah! teach me how to honour—how to love the Marquis De Lauſanne! Good God, my Maria!—I feel that the

taſk is too difficult. To-morrow—oh, to-morrow!—my wretched deſtiny will be for ever ſealed!—No repentance—no appeal can then ſave me—the irrevocable ceremony once paſſed—I am loſt beyond redemption—father!—mother!—to thy tenderneſs!——Alas, my Maria!—the voice of nature pleads not for me—and Victoria is ſacrificed without one ſigh!

The Marquis is here—I am momently perſecuted by him to indulge him in an hour's converſation alone. I evade it—I know not how to refuſe a requeſt which, if I loved him, I would with pleaſure grant,—nor how to grant it—ſince I love him not. Spare your chiding, Maria—to you only do I complain.

He

He is here—he taps at my door—ah, I muſt obey!—*Muſt!*—Is this the language for a man, whom to-morrow's ſun will ſee me wedded to?—That thought—but he entreats—he pleads his impatience.—Once more do I reſign my pen.

This man, my Maria, has endeavoured to dazzle my eyes with the ſplendor of ornaments, which I equally deteſt and deſpiſe. He preſented me with his picture—and offered to tie it round my neck. I ſtarted at the propoſal, and threw him from me with diſdain.—The Marquis looked offended — he hemmed off a reproach — his cheeks glowed with reſentment which he ſtrove to conceal, by kiſſing my hand.—I flung

myſelf

myſelf into a chair—the tears fell plentifully from my eyes:—what a ſcene! my father came in—he darted at me a look of anger. I aroſe—I trembled.

"Perverſe girl," exclaimed he in a terrifying tone, "ſuffer the Marquis to tie his portrait round your neck; and wear it next your heart!"

I tried to approach Lauſanne—my knees ſhook under me—he ſaved me the trouble by flying towards me, and falling at my feet, "Charming—cruel Victoria! behold proſtrate before you an ardent lover:—behold a man who will conſecrate to your happineſs his life—his perſon—fortune—every good he claims on earth—give me but your love—I aſk no other recompence."

"My

"My Lord," cried I in a voice almoſt ſtifled with grief, "I have often told you, I have no heart to give—my duty will carry me to the altar with you—and my virtue will prevent me from breaking thoſe engagements I ſhall make you there.—But, oh!—would to heaven that ſome other woman, more deſerving than myſelf, poſſeſſed thoſe affections you laviſh on me!—I am unworthy my Lord ———"

"Be gone to your apartment, girl!" cried my enraged father, "is it thus you ſhew *your duty?*" I retired—and am here ſeated to lament—to complain of my miſerable fate to the only friend I have left.

The

The hurry---the perturbation---the joy that fill every countenance---ſhock me beyond deſcription.---I view myſelf as an innocent victim they are preparing to lead to the temple of ſome favourite deity, on a day devoted to feſtivity.---I am to be decked with every gaudy flower of nature to make my bondage appear the more conſpicuous---I am to be led in golden bands to ruin---and made magnificently wretched. Ah, my Maria!---to-morrow---let to-morrow be marked down as the blackeſt day of fate!---it will be then---that Victoria ſhall reſign Luzy---and give her hand to his proud---his happy rival!---it will be then---that with the name of Clarence---ſhe ſhall part with happineſs for ever!

—I

---I am ſummoned to attend my mother.

It is now paſt one o'clock---yet ſleep denies to viſit my diſconſolate couch---I will relate to you the occurrences that have happened ſince I was interrupted ſome hours ago: I muſt write to prevent my dwelling too minutely on the gloomy proſpects which await your Victoria---the ſubject---no matter what---but that which concerns me nearly, will, I am ſure, intereſt you more than any other. I ſhall begin then from my appearing in my mother's antichamber according to the orders ſhe was pleaſed to ſend me for that purpoſe.

On my entrance ſhe kindly threw her arms around me, and enquired anxiouſly

about

about my health---then with a ſmiling countenance aſked, whether I had choſen the ornaments beſt ſuited to my complexion, from thoſe that ſhe had ordered to be ſent from Paris? I threw myſelf on my knees before her---and begged her to inform me whether I could hope for no mitigation of my ſentence---and whether I was to be married to the man I deteſted? "Ah, Madam!" continued her unhappy child, "What do thoſe ornaments you ſpeak of avail?---they can adminiſter no cure for a wounded mind---they cannot bring peace to this wretched heart. Pardon me, my dear mother----but my thoughts have been far differently employed! I choſe no flowers----I would not look at the

finery

finery my woman presented me with from Paris---they have no charms for me---I care not what cloaths I wear on the most miserable day of my life."

My mother wept; she spoke of the Marquis's birth---his riches---his magnificence: she concluded by saying, that it was a match on which her fond heart was set, and which the interruption of, would break into a thousand pieces. The very idea of my occasioning her so much anguish shocked me to the soul---my blood seemed to congeal within my veins---I could answer nothing---but my tears expressed the horror of my mind. My dear mother raised me from the ground; and seating me by her, pressed me to her bosom. She talked much of

the

the favour I ſhould confer upon her and my father; ſhe aſſured me that I ſhould be happier than my fearful heart preſaged. She allowed the Marquis to have ſome youthful follies, but was well aſſured that time, and my prudent conduct, would eſtrange him from them. My mother then painted the joy ſhe ſhould feel on ſeeing me give my hand to a man of ſo much worth and taſte; and the idea of rendering her ſatisfied, conquered every ſelfiſh ſentiment.

"It is done, Madam!" cried I, "I yield up liberty---happineſs---content, ſince my doing ſo, can give you felicity: ah, my dear mother! I am ready to preſent my hand to the Marquis---my life ſhall be devoted to your pleaſure

ſure---but haſten, Madam, the marriage ceremony, and let me not reflect on what I have conſented to."

My mother looked delighted and rang her bell; ſhe ordered an attendant to deſire the Duke De Clarencè and the Marquis De Lauſanne to enter: they obeyed the ſummons, and on my mother's telling my father *that I was once again their child*; he caught me in his arms, and poured forth a thouſand thanks for my having done what duty required of me. As for the Marquis---his raptures are not to be deſcribed; he ſaid many gallant things, and endeavoured to convince me by his eyes, that his heart felt more than his tongue could utter. I ſtrove to appear ſatisfied----

nay,

nay, pleaſed with theſe expreſſions---- but, ah, my God!---What were the pangs my ſoul endured at the time!--- I perceived, my dear Maria, that my fate was determined---I therefore put a conſtraint upon thoſe regrets which very often had nearly eſcaped me. I ſhall become the wife of Lauſanne---that is inevitable:---my duty will ſoon oblige me to receive him with chearfulneſs, and a look of pleaſure. That thought occurred to me frequently during the evening----I therefore tried to appear complaiſant to him from voluntary motives, before he ſhould reflect that the marriage ceremony alone entitled him to ſuch behaviour----what it coſt me, I will not ſay---but I liſtened to his love

—I re-

---I received his presents---and I suffered him to tie around my neck his picture.---Oh, Luzy---Luzy!---thy charming image!---but I will be myself---I will be boldly wretched---I will allow him to suspect me of inconstancy---of having betrayed him to his rival---of having preferred an additional few thousands, to a competency with him.---Ah, he will renounce me for ever!---he will abhor my very idea---all this for duty!

I threw myself on my bed for a few moments----I endeavoured to compose my mind----it would not do---and I have again assumed my pen. Tell me, Maria---of what nature Lausanne's heart must be formed, to receive the hand

of

of a woman whose affections he knows have been long engaged to another? ---How can he condescend to be obliged to her duty, when he is convinced it is *that* alone that can influence her kindness towards him? --If I mistake not, Lausanne is imperious----indelicate---- and his libertine principles are not the only bad ones I shall have to contend with. Oh, friend!---what a man have I lost!---how wretched is my destiny!--- but of that no more---I have promised to meet the hour from whence my misery will take its date---with calmness. Heaven grant, Maria, I may have fortitude sufficient to keep that promise!

My mind is exceedingly disturbed---- I hear strange noises!----I thought the

groans of a dying person sounded under my window---the weakness of my spirits expose me to alarms.---I will say my prayers---I will beg of God to calm this tumult in his servant's bosom.

My Maria!----what---whom have I seen!---he is still before me---ah, it was but a dream!---why do I tremble thus? yet I spoke to him---I am sure I spoke to him!---good heavens why this terror!----was it not Luzy I saw----and would Luzy hurt his Victoria? Ah, never! Maria---I left thee to pray---I had no sooner finished my orisons, than an inclination to sleep came over my swoln eyes.----I indulged it----and for that purpose threw myself upon my bed. I fell asleep---but, oh, my God!

what

what a form presented itself to my fancy! ---I beheld Luzy pale as death standing at my bedside, with a poniard in his hand:---he opened wide the curtains--- he looked wistfully at me, and pointed towards heaven. I called to him in the agony of my soul---I strove to seize his robe----he avoided my grasp----he bade me to repent---*for I had ruined him.* "Your perfidy," continued he, "has deprived me of happiness---and thus I avenge myself." He held the weapon over me as if about to strike--- I screamed to him, to spare his Victoria, and in pushing his hand violently from me---I plunged the poniard in his heart. ---Ah, my God!----I saw him fall---I heard him groan! I leaped from my

bed, and fell beſide him---but he turned his dying eyes from me---and calling me the deſtroyer of his peace and life---he fetched a deep ſigh, and expired in torture.---What a cruel phantom! ---I am agitated beyond deſcription---my knees knock together---my fingers refuſe to guide my pen.

Ah, my friend, the horrid day appears that is to behold me the wife of Lauſanne!---it darts upon my paper---and the clouds are making way for the appearance of the ſun.---That ſun!---ah, how ſoon will it ſee me, "the wretched object of my own averſion!" How ſoon will it ſee me, dragged to thoſe marriage rites, which I once hoped to ſolemnize only with Luzy!---that is all

over

over now;---this day yields me up to the Marquis---and from this day, I must endeavour to banish even from my imagination the figure of Luzy.---Too cruel ---too difficult task!

Why are you not with me?---Ah, why am I not allowed the consolation of pouring my griefs into thy sympathizing bosom?---I want a consoler--- I require the presence of a friend to support me in the most calamitous moment of my life.---Maria, when you give your hand to Lindor, remember not the wedding day of Victoria. Marriages are happy where hearts are united ---mine rebels against the master my parents have chosen for it,---and it is therefore---that this day, will be a day

of woe to your friend.---I hear my mother's voice:----what, up so soon?----I must attend her. Adieu--perhaps I shall never subscribe myself again,

VICTORIA DE CLARENCE.

VICTORIA *to* MARIA.

"Nor Hymen, nor the Graces here preside,
"Nor Juno to befriend the blooming bride,
"But fiends with fun'ral bands the process led,
"And faries waited at the genial bed."

NOW, my Maria, it is all over! yesterday I became the wife of Lausanne---and instead of feeling those soft,

ſoft, thoſe tender emotions, which would have poſſeſſed me had I loved the Marquis--my boſom was a chaos of horror, confuſion, and deſpair.

At ten o'clock in the morning I was dreſſed by the hands of my mother and my women for my appearance at chapel, where the ceremony of making me miſerable was to be performed. I did not ſhed one tear during the buſineſs of the toilette--but I was extremely ill--I could hardly ſtand--I could with infinite difficulty keep my head from falling on my boſom.--I felt as if the whole world had abandoned me to deſtruction, and that my fond mother was the firſt to condemn her child to ruin. They adorned my hair with flowers--

they braided it with strings of pearl: they put upon me an artois robe of satin.---My mother clasped it with her own hands----my women praised my figure---my mother told me I never looked so handsome. I was silent---I was very sad---my heart was bursting. When I was almost dressed, my mother looked at her watch;---a portrait of her friend Lazy, which he had presented her with, and which she always wore on its chain, struck my wretched eyes. ---My soul seemed to die within me; my limbs denied their support, and I fainted in the arms of Nanhette.---I will be less prolix, my Maria.

After some pains I was brought again to life: the hour was arrived which was

to

to carry us to chapel. The carriages were in readineſs—the Marquis came up to adverti ſe us of his being all impatience, and that they waited to convey us to the ſacred temple. As ſoon as he beheld me, he knelt and preſſed my hand to his lips—I made him a reſpectful—but a diſtant curteſy—he threw his arms round my waiſt; and whiſperingly reproached me with my coldneſs.—I anſwered not—I hardly regarded what he had ſaid—my thoughts were fixed on a far different—and, alas! —a far diſtant object.—Pardon me, Maria!—I will endeavour to check that idea.

We were conducted to the ſaloon, where my father and all the company

were seated. As soon as I appeared, my father approached me with a joyful countenance, and a lively step; he opened his arms to receive me, I threw myself into them, and sunk upon his shoulder in a flood of tears: he kissed my cheek with fondness---he called me by a thousand tender names---then presenting me to each of my relations and those of Lausanne's who were present, he put my hand into the Marquis's, and blessed us audibly. Lausanne I believe appeared handsome and graceful to every eye but mine---his raptures were delicate and lively---and had my heart acknowledged him with pleasure, I might in those moments have thought him charming. We soon after repaired to

the

the chapel,—my good father Francis pronounced the nuptial benediction,—he seemed to regard me with an eye of tender compassion—(for the humane and pious man knows full well the situation of his penitent's heart) he uttered each prayer pertaining to the sacred duties of matrimony, in a clear articulate voice, and with the most solemn devotion. The Marquis appeared gay, gallant, and happy; my father and mother looked cheerful and satisfied. As for my part—on standing up before the altar, my nerves are not to be described,—a faintness seized my death-like eyes grew dim—and I was obliged to lean on my mother's arm to support me from falling during the ceremony.

When it was finished—I involuntarily clasped my hands with fervour, and, looking up towards heaven, I exclaimed, "Ah, blessed God!—it is indeed *now* done beyond redemption!" I was not myself at the instant, my dear Maria; my brain seemed to turn round—I was sensible of nothing but my misery, and forgot where I was, or who were present. To prevent me from saying more, the Marquis embraced me, and thanked heaven in a gay manner *that it was indeed over*, and that I was irrevocably his. This brought me to myself—I blushed for my imprudence, and sighed inwardly for my insensibility. The day was spent in festivity by all but me—I strove to conceal my

melan-

melancholy—but, alas! I succeeded not—and, ah! that I could draw the dark veil of oblivion over that day for ever!—I can tell you no more, my Maria—only this—that I am at present unhappy—but I will endeavour to make up my mind to be as contented as I can, by acting through life with duty and obedience: my conscience at least will never add a sting to those painful reflections, which must at times obtrude; and if I am destined to be always miserable, the remembrance of my having conformed to the wishes of my parents, will in some measure sustain me from sinking under calamity.

Adieu, my Maria! I hope to have better accounts of the health of your mother:

mother: tell her, her child Victoria kisses, in idea, those loved hands, which have so often supported her in her infancy. To the Comtesse De Villeneauf, do I owe many of the happiest hours of my life; and for this valuable relation, and adopted parent, do I profess the most entire respect and affection. Tell her so, my Marie—and do you be assured, my more than sister, my ever kind and dearest friend, that, in all situations, I shall never cease to be,

Most sincerely yours,

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE.

The

The Marquise DE LAUSANNE, *to Monsieur* DE MONTVILLE.

SHE is mine Montville;---the finest woman in France is mine!---Long have I loved---but now, how long I may love her, is the question.---Yet, hang it---she has beauty and accomplishments sufficient to make her ever new---ever interesting;---but, ah, Montville!---she returns not my passion with the ardour Lausanne has a right to expect. She is gloomy---sad---submissive---and gentleness itself---but those smiles---those laughing graces which once adorned her lips, are fled---they fled---yes, my friend, they fled with the handsome

---bloom-

----blooming----ſeducing Luzy! ah, I was determined he ſhould not bear away the prize! The Duke De Clarencè's daughter with ſo much beauty---ſo much wit---and ſuch a fortune---was a match fit only for Lauſanne---and he has got her. What right had that proud rival to contend for her divine perſon?---for Victoria De Clarencè!---His family, you will ſay, is as good as mine; his figure, perhaps----ſomething better---his addreſs excellent----his accompliſhments---well, well!---we will not talk of his accompliſhments----but his fortune, that's the thing---his fortune is not equal to Lauſanne's; no, he could never adorn my Victoria with the magnificence that will appear to her in

all

all my preſence! I long to ſhew her at Paris—at Verſailles as the Marchioneſs De Lauſanne—how ſhall I be envied!—Ah, Montville! I talk like an enraptured lover. Colombe's voice has at preſent no charms for me—nor has Du Thé's grace or figure. I verily believe I could both hear and behold them without emotion;—yet I own—I cannot ſtay much longer in the country—Paris is more agreeable!—beſides—I want to try whether the amuſements—the admiration—the flattery my wife will receive there—may not inſpire her with a little gaiety. Faith ſhe is at preſent a charming creature!—but rather too much in the penſeroſa ſtyle for me. How does the pretty Madame La Bert

do?

for a quarter of an hour—I then beg
to recollect whose presence I was i
and turning to the Marquis, I ask
him some questions concerning t
roads of Italy which he had lately tr
velled.—I was not answered, Maria-
I ventured to look up in his face—n
God!—I never saw so deformed a cou
tenance—his cheeks glowed with t
suppression of his resentment—his ey
were sullenly half closed—he bit l
lips—and every feature appeared co
vulsed. I was shocked—I will own
you I was terrified. I knew not wh
ailed him—and fearing that he was n
well, I put my hand upon his arm, a
enquired where was his pain?—Wou
you believe that this obsequious lov

—the

—threw from him with violence my hand, and answered, *that I was his pain?*—Ah, can I tell you what I endured at that minute!—no, it is impossible! This was the first time I had been used harshly by any one but my father—and as I loved my father, I could more easily reconcile myself to his will: —But here!—yet I must forbear to declare my hatred to a man, whom it is my duty to respect. I will proceed: You, Maria, who know the timid nature of my temper, will suppose, that I burst into a flood of tears on receiving so unkind a repulse;—but there you will mistake; my soul was tortured it is true—but my pride prevented my testifying it by tears;—I sighed indeed from the

the inmoſt receſſes of my heart, though I uttered not a ſyllable—not one reproach. The Marquis turned his eyes towards me ſome minutes after—he beheld me an image of patience—of humility—he was touched with remorſe—he ſighed—he attempted ſoon to ſeize that hand, he had ſo lately caſt off with diſdain—but it was now my turn to convince him that I had feeling; and I coldly endeavoured to diſengage it from him. He threw his arms round me as I ſat. "You are offended my ſweet love!—I entreat your pardon—but your tears at leaving your father's houſe (or rather at coming with me) ſhocked and grieved me—I reſented it too harſhly—but come!—you will confeſs I had reaſon."

reason." My answer was very full, and very cool. I hinted that my marriage vow of obedience would, I believed, be often tried by him: that as long as I could oblige him I would do it; but that if he supposed I could appear indifferent at meeting with, or parting from my parents merely to gratify a caprice of his, I would not—nay—I could not promise him obedience there. I added, that my sensibility had ever been my greatest misfortune, but I hoped it was so directed, as never to become to me a reproach. The Marquis looked sneeringly at me, and pronounced half articulately—half not, the name of Lazy. I pretended to take no notice of this insult—and he has been

very

very civil—very distant since. Shall I confess that I am not sorry for this change in his manner towards me—the caresses of one whom we behold with disgust—but where does my pen carry me!—oh, rub out that sentence from your memory?—I would now do it from the paper—but you have charged me to let the slips of my heart appear to you, as they are made.—Well then, it shall go—but you must instruct me how to command my feelings, even when I am speaking to a friend.

I am going this evening to the Italian comedy. My good friend Madame De Sanscerre is now in Paris, and is to be one of the party. Adieu, my Maria!

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE.

VICTORIA *to* MARIA.

MY life is at present a continual round of dissipation; and without enjoying any of the pleasures which my husband gives into with avidity, I am obliged to go through them all at the expence of health—rest—and peace. What a misfortune it is, my dear Maria, to be necessitated to live with a person whose turn of mind—whose temper—whose delights are so widely different! Our house is crouded with the very best company in Paris it is true; but to have it always crouded, is terrible! The Duke De Maurice is my shadow—he haunts me eternally. I am thought, it seems, a beauty; and on that account I hear nothing but flattery. Can they

ſuppoſe, my Maria, that a pretty face—that an elegant perſon, can only belong to a fool?—If ſo, I am treated as I ought to be:—but if otherwiſe, why am I not ſpoken to in a ſtyle, that my education would inſtruct me to enjoy? I am heartily ſick of Paris, and all I have ſeen in it. Would I could bury myſelf in ſome remote corner of France, "Forgetting and forgotten!"

There is a Madame La Bert here, who is handſome, witty, and much admired. She has nothing that can recommend her in my eyes. Her wit is too groſs for a delicate ear, and her vivacity borders on aſſurance. The Marquis is quite her ceciſbeo, and ſhe ſeems to enjoy his aſſiduities. To be plain with

with you, my dear Maria, I ſhould be uneaſy about their intimacy did I love Lauſanne. As it is—I can conſole myſelf but too eaſily.—I ſay *but*—becauſe, what I feel for him, is not the affection I ſhould feel for a huſband.

The other night at a ball given by the Duke De Maurice, after having danced ſome Engliſh dances, I found the room in which I was too warm; and taking Madame De Sanſcerre by the arm, we walked into an apartment which appeared cooler than the reſt, from having, as we thought, no perſons in it. We had not advanced many ſteps when I heard a female voice ſay, "Ah, Marquis!—ſhould you ever give me reaſon to doubt your fidelity!"—"Fear nothing,"

returned a man in well known accer
" you have charms ſufficient to att
me to you for ever."

We proceeded quite into the ro
ſoon after this ſpeech, and I beheld
Marquis De Lauſanne, ſeated by
handſome La Bert, with one of
hands preſſed to his lips, whilſt his a
encircled her waiſt as ſhe ſat. I ſtart
on perceiving really that theſe lov
were two I had reaſon to know ſo we
but we retreated from the ſcene, faſ
than we had approached it: their conf
ſion was manifeſt, and I left them to rec
ver of it, in what ever way they thoug
proper. Madame De Sanſcerre ſeem
more ſhocked than myſelf. " My Vi
toria," cried ſhe, preſſing my han
" th

"that woman will be the ruin of your husband, if reason comes not to his aid." I answered not. "Ah!" added my good friend, "the Duke De Clarence has thrown away a pearl of inestimable worth." Madame De Sanscerre applied her hand to her eyes. As for my part, my affliction was more intolerable when I gave him my hand, and found him an enraptured lover. I lamented now the badness of his morals — but indeed, my dear Maria, Madame La Bert I forgave with all my heart.

A greater mortification than this I endured soon after. The Duke De Maurice, Comte De Parte, the Chevalier De Mondonoir, Monsieur De Mont-

ville, Madame De Sailscerne, two other ladies and myself, were ſtanding up to dance, when a buz about the room of "how handſome he is! how elegant! what a man!" reached our ears—and curioſity ſuſpended for a while our deſire to begin the dance: it was however ungratified till we finiſhed; when I ſaw the Marquis De Palmene, introduce to the Duke De Maurice, the handſome Comte De Solignac; whom you may remember to have been Luzy's boſom friend. He had juſt left Italy, and parted with this friend. He arrived in Paris that morning, and the Marquis De Palmene brought him with him to this ball given by the moſt magnificent and elegant man in Paris,

I ſtood

I ſtood near the Duke as he advanced. Ah, my God! — when I beheld him — what did I not feel! ſhame — confuſion — horror! — he looked at me — our eyes met — I threw mine down as conſcious of guilt: he ſhortly after came up to me. "Well, charming Victoria!" cried he, "I congratulate you on your nuptials — I heard of them but this morning — the news had not arrived in Italy when I left it: alas! — I wiſh it had — I have an unfortunate friend there, madam, who will ſtand in need of ſome conſolation when he hears it." During this ſpeech I had not courage to look at Solignac — my eyes were fixed on the ground, and tears fell from them in abundance. The Comte ſeemed

almoſt as much affected as myſelf. He took my hand—he drew me apart from the reſt of the company. "How comes it, fair Victoria, that thoſe vows which you made Luzy, and which were regiſtered in heaven, have been broken through by you with contempt—and ſcattered to the winds? Ah, woman, woman!" added the gentle Solignac, "who can fathom the depth of thy diſſimulation—of thy profound art! who could ſuppoſe that, in this too beauteous form, a falſe—nay!—a cruel heart was depoſited! I am perhaps too warm!—but when I reflect upon the worth—the injured worth of my Luzy—I cannot promiſe to ſpeak to you in the language of ſoftneſs." "My Lord," cried I, hurt

hurt at what he had said, and covered with confusion, "blame me not too rashly—to-morrow you shall receive a letter from me—my unhappy fate shall there be told—shall be explained too justly! Retire my Lord—my emotion is observed—think better of me—and ah, remember,—I have a father whose commands are absolute." This, my Maria, I thought I owed to the rectitude of my own heart—to my long and sincere friendship for Solignac: I knew him when I had never seen Luzy—and Luzy's intimacy with him did not abate the ardour of my esteem for Solignac.—Oh! when I look back ——pardon me!—I will not forget that I am the wife of Lausanne.

After speaking to the Comte, I retired from the ball. My agitations were violent; my soul seemed oppressed with a weight of woe—I threw myself into my carriage, and was brought home more dead than alive. Nannette, as she undressed me, often wiped away the torrents of tears that fell from my eyes, and the poor creature could scarcely restrain her sobs: at that time I was almost insensible of my situation—but reflection has since painted it to me in its true colours. What could Nannette have supposed!—but no matter—Nannette, I fear, guesses too truly the cause of all my griefs.

As soon as I had dismissed my woman, I retired to my closet; and there penned

penned the following billet to the Comte.

To the Comte DE SOLIGNAC.

WHAT can I ſay, my Lord, in extenuation of a ſubject, that has been the cauſe of all my ſorrows, without acting inconſiſtently with that duty, to which I have ſo largely ſacrificed?—My father—my huſband—how will they appear to the amiable Solignac, if the daughter—the wife accuſes them of cruelty and indelicacy?—Ah, my Lord!—that heaven which bore ſolemn witneſs to the vows I made Luzy, can juſtify me from the charge of falſeneſs or diſ-

ſimulation—thoſe vows are ſtill inviolated by my heart—but my filial—my trembling obedience ſubmitted to the harſh commands of a parent—and I was dragged an unwilling victim to the altar with Lauſanne. What remains more for me to ſay?—nothing—but to aſſure you, that though my poor heart rebels againſt this tyranny—my duty to the Marquis—the virtue of my ſoul will forbid me to behold again a man whom I know to be too amiable--too eloquent for the repoſe of that peace, which my innocence alone can now enſure me. To God—and to you my friend, I hope I ſhall ſtand acquitted for my marriage with the Marquis—and my determination never to ſee Luzy

more.

more.—Alas, poor Luzy!—my heart bleeds for the pangs thou wilt endure, when thou hearest that Victoria has betrayed thee to thy rival!—Ah, my Lord, could I add those pangs to the sufferings that already corrode my bosom—Luzy should not even sigh at my remembrance! Adieu, amiable, generous Solignac! be ever assured of my friendship.

After I had sealed it I became more composed—I had indeed owned to him, that the Marquis was not the object of my choice; but I had sworn to respect him as my husband—to preserve towards him my fidelity; that thought gave me comfort, and I went to bed with more content than I had done for

many

many nights. The next morning I dispatched Nannette with it to the Comte, and she brought me back these lines:

"TOO amiable — too unfortunate Victoria—I feel your sufferings, I applaud your virtue! Solignac weeps over your affliction, and in that one word, comprehends the everlasting despair of his friend. I will leave Paris—it is become odious to me. I can hear of nothing but the name of Lausanne, instead of that of Clarencè. You are the admiration — the envy of this city. Beware of the duke de Maurice!

DE SOLIGNAC."

"Beware of the Duke De Maurice!" repeated I to myſelf—yes, my good friend, I will beware of his art—of his flattery. At that moment, the Marquis entered my dreſſing room: I bluſhed at his appearance, for I ſtill held Solignac's letter in my hand. The Marquis is a polite man, and a faſhionable huſband—he enquired gallantly about my health, and hoped all the billetdoux I received were dictated with all that elegancy my beauty had a right to command. I put the letter in my pocket, and aſſured him, I neither received, or wiſhed to receive a billetdoux. He ſmiled, and, tapping my cheek, exclaimed, "What!—not from the Duke?" I burſt into tears—the mention

of

of his name now alarmed me. "Ah, my Lord!" cried I, "I do not like the Duke—I deteſt Paris—ſuffer me to retire for a little while to your ſeat at Lauſanne." The Marquis hummed a tune—pauſed—then looking at me ſeriouſly, he exclaimed, "Why, madam, you are at liberty to go where you pleaſe—I do not find it convenient myſelf to leave Paris—but that I am ſure will be no objection to your doing ſo. Adieu, my timid—pretty—prudent Marchioneſs—take care that the ſight of a billetdoux does not throw you into an irrecoverable fit!"

The Marquis left me in a ſtate of mind—in a diſpoſition of ſoul my pen would not, if it could, deſcribe. Fare-

well,

well, I am ſummoned to receive the company who are to celebrate in a ball here, this night, the birth day of the huſband of your friend. Ah unhappy day! what did it not portend to the deſtiny of your

VICTORIA!

The Comte DE LUZY, *to the Comte* DE SOLIGNAC.

I HAVE little to ſay to you, my friend—I have nothing more to do with the world. Victoria De Clarencè is married—my father laſt night breathed

his

his laſt—there is no other circumſtance that can affect me!

I ſhall call on you at Paris to take of you an embrace, that ſhall never more be repeated. I am unfit for ſociety—my ſoul is torn with a thouſand conflicting paſſions—I am wilder than madneſs itſelf—I am fiercer than a ſavage! grief harmonizes not my mind—it is all tumult—diſcord—and deſpair!—Oh Victoria! my ſoft, my gentle miſtreſs!—but I forget my injuries.—Solignac I am coming—meet me at Palmene's. I ſhall enter Paris without attendants—without parade. One day—one night will I give to friendſhip—and then forget that ſuch a wretch exiſts as

LUZY.

VICTORIA *to* MARIA.

MY name is the general topic of Paris, and with it is joined that of the Duke De Maurice. My husband sees his attention—his assiduity to me—he encourages them by telling the Duke in a half laughing strain, *that perseverance alone can conquer my heart :* he insults me after, in a whisper, by prophecying his success. Can a man be so lost to all sentiment—nay, — can he be so regardless of his own honor, as to suffer close siege to be made to his wife's virtue ? 'tis horrible ! I treat the Duke with a degree of coldness and reserve,

reſerve, which awes him into reſpect—and the Marquis with an air of contempt which his folly and his immoral character inſpire. Ah, my Maria, can I help it?—It is in vain that I have ſhewn Lauſanne proofs of my obedience—it is in vain my having ſeemed to regard him as my Lord and huſband! Lauſanne is weak—is conceited—is wicked: the affection of a virtuous woman has no charms for him; I am neglected whole weeks for a ſet of wretches, whoſe very names carry with them an idea of infamy. His health—his fortune are yielded up to them, and he never returns to me, but to enjoy, at the expence of my peace, a conſtant

round

round of company and diſſipation at his own houſe.

At a ſuperb ſupper given laſt night by Madame De Sanſcerre, the Duke De Maurice placed himſelf on one ſide of me; and the elegant Marquis De Palmene on the other. The Duke endeavoured to gain my attention by the moſt refined gallantry. The Marquis indeed poſſeſſed it, becauſe I knew his flattery was merely aſſumed to prevent the dangerous Maurice from having opportunities of forwarding his ſuit. The Duke looked chagrined at my preference of the Comte—Palmene regarded it not, but ſeemed to encreaſe in politeneſs, in wit, and pleaſure.

"You are a happy man, Marquis!" cried

cried the jealous Maurice, on ſeeing him faſten my bracelet which had ſlipped. "And I am not inſenſible to my happineſs," replied the gallant Palmene, and carried my hand to his lips. The Duke aroſe—he was violently agitated—he walked from me to conceal his reſentment—but returned ſoon with a more placid countenance. He propoſed vingt-un, I conſented to make one, in order to engage him at cards, and to prevent his tormenting me with a converſation in itſelf too particular, and too gallant for a virtuous married woman to attend to, without an infringment on that line of delicacy which I have lain down as a rule for my conduct. We played—the party was large

—I won

—I won at the beginning, but I got up a very conſiderable loſer. I loſt to two Engliſh gentlemen in particular (ſtrangers to me, whom I had never before ſeen) fifty Louis—I had not ſo much about me. The Duke offered his purſe—I would not accept of it. "My Lord," ſaid I to one of thoſe gentlemen, "you do not leave Paris before to-morrow morning I hope!" He *aſſured me that he ſhould not*; —*but were he to do ſo, it would be of no conſequence—when he returned, he would remember that the Marchioneſs De Lauſanne was his debtor, and he would do himſelf the honour to remind her of it in perſon.* I thanked him, but ſeeing at that moment the Marquis De Palmene, who approached

approached and offered me the ſum, I accepted it, and diſcharged theſe debts of honour. The Duke was now abſolutely in a rage—he looked ſternly at the Marquis—he viewed me with an air of indignation: he drew near, and whiſpered, "You have ſuffered, Madam, in my eſteem—you are loſt in my opinion. If you prefer that odious figure, have delicacy ſufficient to keep your taſteleſs amour a ſecret from the world. A lover's purſe you can uſe freely—that of a friend's you diſcard."

He pauſed for want of breath—his paſſion deprived him of it. I aſſumed an air of chilling haughtineſs—I aroſe from my ſeat—I turned full upon him—and with a look of mingled indignation

and

and contempt exclaimed, " Pray, my Lord, how long is it ſince your grace has taken into your hands the reins of my government?—I like no man as a lover but my huſband — you leaſt of all." I turned away.—My air—my manner froze him. He was ſtruck into ſilence. — He threw himſelf on a ſofa that was near — while I ſlipped out of the room, and ſtepping into my carriage, I got home without enduring more either from his officious gallantry, or from his inſulting jealouſy. He has been twice here this morning — I have excuſed myſelf from ſeeing him. He is of all men the moſt dangerous— elſe why Solignac's caution! It has given me an averſion to the Duke that is per-

haps unjuſt—yet it is ſafe, and I do not argue againſt it.

The Comte De Solignac, I find, has not left Paris — he came hither juſt now with Madame De Sanſcerre, who has preſſed me to go with her to-morrow to her Chateau, which is fifteen miles from this city. I am to ſpend with her three days that are, ſhe ſays, to be dedicated to friendſhip alone. "From the buſtle of Paris, my dear," ſaid ſhe, preſſing my hand, "you will have leiſure to recover thoſe charmings looks, which care and fatigue have caſt a cloud over." Madame De Sanſcerre viewed me at that moment with eyes of compaſſion. My huſband's libertine life is well known, and ſhe pities me ſincere-

ly.

ly. I promiſed to go with her. Soligñac is to be with us.

The Marquis Le Lauſanne left Paris ſome days ago with Madame La Bert, and many others — they are gone on a party of pleaſure. Poor Madame La Bert! — if ſhe depends upon the fidelity of her lover, ſhe will be too credulous; every pretty opera ſinger in the metropolis can claim a title to his heart, by putting on a few of thoſe artful blandiſhments, which have often taken in unwary youth. Lauſanne is however old enough to ſee the fallacy of ſuch allurements — but his folly — or his love of the moſt unworthy of our ſex (which you pleaſe) is too powerful to ſuffer any motive whatever to

withdraw him from them. He will not return I hope before my visit to Madame De Sanscerre has been paid. If he should, I shall be upbraided for being out of the way when his company ought to be received. I am unhappy, my dear Maria — indeed I am! and where is the balm that can relieve my distempered soul? —— Ah, Luzy, Luzy! — had fate permitted ——

You may perceive I give into amusements — you may also perceive I suffer the most trifling subjects to engross my pen. — I sing — I talk — I dance — it is all in vain, believe me. The image of Luzy is ever present to my view, is ever present in my heart. — After spending nights of the utmost inquietude—

etude —— after wandering with him in terrific dreams, amidſt ſcenes of blood and horror — I ariſe — I haſten on a deſhabille — I fly to chapel — I proſtrate myſelf at the foot of the ſacred altar — I entreat for patience, reſignation and fortitude to overcome a paſſion that became criminal when I married his rival. — Ah, my Maria! — does my God abandon me? — elſe, why when I riſe from my knees does my heart ſtill warmly beat — ſtill heave ſome ſighs of regret for the amiable — the loſt Luzy? —— My loved Luzy — if I may yet dare to call thee ſo — think not too harſhly of me. — Remember that you have often told me, "One act of filial obedience, was worth

seven o'clock in her post-coach, and we set off immediately for this elegant and beautiful spot, which Madame De Sanscerre adorns with every charm of nature. Our journey was swift, gay, and happy. We arrived about nine o'clock at the end of it, and the remainder of the day was spent in a manner the most agreeable that could be devised. We read, we walked, we played on the softest instruments, and our voices aided the harmony of those sounds, which we drew from our lutes. Solignac was quite himself, and Madame De Sanscerre lost not for one moment, her charming and delicate vivacity. Towards the dusk of the evening, she proposed that we should visit

her

her temple consecrated to Diana. It was situated in the thickest part of a delightful wood, about a mile from the house. Its structure without was magnificent, and it was fitted up with every charm of elegant simplicity. Upon the top glittered a resplendant crescent, and upon the door were these words inscribed:

"Traveller, enter without fear,
Innocence, Chastity and Virtue,
Here reside."

We entered—refreshments were prepared—but we saw not a soul—every thing transporting—and seemed to have been executed by some invisible, some magical hand. Solignac took a German flute that lay near—Madame De Sans-

cerre accompanied it with her voice. The moon now began to assume its empire over the night, and with its clear and soft resulgency darted its rays upon the Temple. I was affected—my bosom beat with the most delightful sensations. The beauty of the night—the tranquility that reigned throughout—but most of all, the harmony of the sounds which Sanscerre and Solignac filled the room with, occasioned I know not what in my soul, and I burst into a flood of tears—Solignac arose, and took hold of my hand.

"Charming Victoria," cried he with emotion, "your gentle breast acknowledges the power of virtuous sensibility. I have one favour to ask of you, which

if

if I thought it were incompatible with your delicacy, your honour, I would not make."

Madame De Sanscere, at that instant, wiped away some drops that fell from her eyes, and bade me be assured of her prudence—of her regard for my reputation.

—I was alarmed at this serious introduction—I begged of them to speak; and earnestly enquired what they would have me do?

"My friend Luzy," replied Soignac (I trembled at the name) "my friend Luzy is about to leave France for ever—he is now here—he wishes to bid you an eternal adieu. He has lost—his father; he has lost his Victoria; what

then has the world in store which he can prize!—Dejected—despairing—miserable—he entreats you to admit him once more to your presence—to suffer him at your feet to pour out a prayer for your repose. Yet—if you consent not—if you can doubt of the purity of those sentiments which you have known so long—if you can suspect his honour—he will never seek this last, this poor atonement:—he will quit France—he will leave Madame De Sanscerre's house, without daring to intrude into your presence. Luzy, without one single comfort—will bury himself for ever in some obscure corner of the globe—far remote from the society of all he holds dear."

He paused; Solignac applied his hand-

handkerchief to his eyes—he was much agitated. Madame De Sanſcerre took my hand.

"Would I, do you think, my Victoria," said ſhe, "make any requeſt to you, that could be derogatory to your virtue?—God forbid!—I have ever been your friend—nor would I have made you this entreaty, but that I have beheld the altered unhappy object of my pity. He leaves France to-morrow—he embarks for Martinico—we ſhall never more behold him. Refuſe him not the only gleam of conſolation yet remaining—a laſt ſigh breathed before you—a laſt look towards the centre of his happineſs."

Madame De Sanſcerre wept bitterly

—I con-

—I continued motionless—I was in the most dreadful perplexity.

"Ah, my friends!" I at length exclaimed, "let not your pity for Luzy involve me in the sad reflection of having acted inconsistently with those delicate sentiments which Lausanne has a right to claim from me,—If I behold Luzy—will not some rebellious wishes—will not some regrets take possession of me? Ah!" added I, at the same time throwing myself into the arms of Madame De Sanscerne, "save me from deviating, even in idea, from the duty of my marriage vow."

A voice—a well known voice, at that moment, issued from a distant part of the Temple, and pronounced these words:

words: "Solignac—I charge thee preſs her no farther;—perhaps ſhe is right! tell her, Luzy will bleſs her to the lateſt minute of his life."

I ſtarted from the arms of my friend—I claſped my hands together with fervor, and fell ſenſeleſs on my knees—what became of me for a ſhort while I know not—but when I recovered, I found myſelf on a ſofa near the window, and my two friends leaning anxiouſly over me.

"Fear nothing, Madam," cried Solignac, "you ſhall not be longer perſecuted.—The poor wretch was detained by me till this night, in hopes of ſeeing you. Forgive therefore his preſumption, ſince I alone was the cauſe of it, and for-

get

get him for ever, who has hopelessly aspired to your friendship. Come, charming Victoria, possess yourself: think no more of this interruption of our happiness—Luzy will leave—nay, is perhaps gone by this time, and your delicate virtue will no longer be endangered."

"Cruel Solignac!" exclaimed I with heart-rending sorrow. "Cruel Solignac!" and my tears told all.

"Grieve no more, my dear Victoria," said Madame De Sancerre; "if you choose to bid Luzy adieu, he shall be summoned instantly—if you do not—think no more of this unlucky scheme, and perplex yourself no further."

I paused a few moments—I arose

from the sofa—I walked up and down the room in some confusion—at length the reflection of the wrongs I had done him, rushed at once into my mind, and the cruelty of prohibiting him this trifling recompence shocked me.— I endeavoured to prepare my soul to receive him—I resolved to behold him as my friend, and to banish the idea of lover.

"There is nothing more to be considered," cried I; "the conflict is over. Tell your friend, my Lord, that I am willing to see him—that I desire to exculpate that part of my conduct towards him, which he may suppose to have been injurious. Conscious of my own innocence in assenting to this interview,

eyes fixed on each other — tears were all the eloquence we uſed—and ſurely they told more than all the language in the world could have expreſſed! After ſome minutes I endeavoured to ſpeak.

"My Lord—my Lord," — cried I ——— I could go no farther — the ſound died upon my lips. He threw himſelf at my feet. In that one minute, my Maria, I forgot my vows at the altar — I beheld Luzy as the object of my moſt ardent love—as the Lord of all my wiſhes—I ſunk upon his boſom in a flood of grief—he claſped me in his arms—our ſighs—our ſobs—our tears were intermingled. At laſt I began to reflect (though in the embrace of

of Luzy) that I owed to the Marquis De Lausanne a far different conduct—that my duty, my delicacy—should forbid me to indulge Luzy in such proofs of tenderness. That notion sufficed—I disengaged myself from his arms, and strove to assume a more composed, a more determined air. Luzy forgot not, for an instant, the respect due to my character—due to my virtue—he suffered me to quit his embrace—and kissed my hand as a proof of his obedience.

"My Lord," cried I with a voice almost inarticulate, "you see before you an unhappy weak woman.—After what has passed, I need not say, that you are, and ever will be the object of my affection.—A father's stern commands

mands — a husband's rights, have rendered this passion no longer innocent — I must endeavour to subdue it—I must resolve to behold you no more. Farewell, too amiable Luzy!" added I, almost stifled with my sorrow, "forget, renounce me for ever!" — Luzy once more threw his arms around me.

"Renounce you!" exclaimed he, "ah, teach me how!" and he pressed me to his bosom. "Forget you!" After some moments pause, "May that hour be my last!——No, most adored Victoria, I will only promise that which I know I can perform—I consent to banish myself for ever from your sight —will that satisfy your cruelty?—will that content your inexorable virtue?"

—I wept

—I wept—he went on.——"Every moment that I ſtay is bliſs—but that dreadful one muſt arrive at laſt, which will for ever ſeparate us!—I promiſed only a few fleeting minutes to trouble you—I will keep to my word—I will tear myſelf from thee."—He preſſed me faſter in his arms.—"Victoria," cried he, "Adieu!"—yet ſtill he motioned not to depart.—"One laſt kiſs!" added he—and he took a thouſand.—It was now, my dear Maria, that I felt the imprudence of my behaviour—I told Luzy that I did feel it, and that his abſence was now abſolutely neceſſary.—He—aroſe he begged me to pardon him—he kneeled again, and implored from heaven its choiceſt bleſſings on me.

"Well,

"Well, Madam," cried he with a tremulous and ſorrowful accent, "you now behold me about to take of you an everlaſting adieu.—To-morrow I embark for Martinico—to-morrow, dear Victoria"— and he preſſed my hand to his heart— "to-morrow will be the laſt day which will ſee me in France!"

"Luzy," replied I in an agony of grief, "our cruel fate commands of us this ſeparation. I will not diſſuade you from your purpoſe, but will endeavour to imitate your virtue. Adieu, my beſt, my deareſt friend!" and I threw myſelf into his arms; "adieu for ever; Victoria's heart may break—but her duty—her virtue forbid that ſhe ſhould complain."

After

After many embraces—after a torrent of tears—and a tempest of sighs—we tore ourselves from each other.—Solignac conducted his friend from my sight—and Madame De Sanscerre hastened to relieve my anguish. When I beheld her, I wrung my hands in silence—I wept upon her bosom.—Madame De Sanscerre talked me into composure—and reasoned—and sympathized with me by turns. Soon after Solignac came back with tearful eyes, and informed us that the Marquis De Palmene and Luzy had set off for Bourdeaux that moment, from whence Luzy was to embark on the stormy ocean. Ah, Heaven—ah, blessed God be his protection!—what will become of me, if through

my unhappy fate he should be lost?—ah, horrid idea!—cruel suggestion!

And now, my dear Maria, what will you think of me?—what will you say to all this?—you will call my behaviour weak—you may perhaps think me wanting in delicacy—do not suppose the latter—I could not bear that you should hold me deficient in the greatest charm of woman.—Put yourself into my situation, imagine that you behold Lindor, a despairing lover, undone by your cruelty. — Your sensible heart would reach to him a hand of pity—a gleam of comfort—surely that would not be incompatible with innocence!—if it is—how lost is your Victoria!

I am still at Madame De Sahscerre's, though

though every hour I stay but encreases my affliction. I walk towards that fatal Temple, and behold him, in idea, whom my soul loveth.—I hear his voice in every wind—I hear his step in the rustling of every leaf—this place nourishes this destructive poison — I must fly from it—yet whither shall I fly?—ah, my God! is it to the house of Lausanne?

I am determined to set off this night for Paris — I have told Madame De Sanscerre of my intention, she and Solignac will accompany me—they are all goodness, and kindly bear with my unhappy caprices.

Adieu, my Maria.—I have written thee a volume. Do not chide me in

your next.—I am not well—I am not proof against these ills of fortune—against thy displeasure least of all.

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE.

VICTORIA *to* MARIA.

LINDOR presented me with your letter yesterday, my dear Maria. All I can say in answer to it is, that your friendship is my greatest blessing, and that your part of a censor, takes not from you that of indulgence and humanity. At the moment you point

out

out a folly, you soften it by your pity; and shew, by your judgment, how to rectify it. I rejoice that I possess such a friend as my Maria, and while heaven will spare her to me, I cannot be totally unhappy.

When Lindor was presented to me, I was immersed in a crowd—our house was full of company. He approached me with all that grace and elegance so natural to him;—but what was above all, with a look of sensibility in which I read his pity for your friend. My affection for Lindor, was always great—but I thought I never loved him more than at that instant. The Marquis De L. V.——attended him to me, and told me in a whisper that his friend

Lindor, he perceived, was too much affected to speak, but that in the course of the evening, he hoped I would give him an opportunity of saying a few words to me. I was distressed myself —but with a nod of approbation I signified an assent to do so. I took care to do as he wished, and, in about an hour after his entrance, I walked with him into another apartment, which I thought more private than it proved to be. As soon as we were alone, the amiable Lindor embraced me, and without uttering a syllable, burst into tears; mine flowed plentifully upon his shoulder, and sighs of distress, broke from my oppressed heart. After a pause of some moments, he told me, in an al-

most

most inarticulate voice, that he had left my Maria well, that he had a letter for me, which he would not delay to give me—but that he was too much overpowered with a thousand conflicting ideas at that time, to render his stay with me either delightful or proper; and presenting me with your letter, he bowed, and was about to depart, when I called after him to appoint a time for my seeing him without interruption. —He proposed the following evening at my own house—I agreed to it, and he took his leave.

As soon as Lindor was gone, I threw myself into a chair, and without breaking the seal of your packet, I kissed it with fervor.

"Dear loved hand!" cried I, as I held it to my lips—"thou wilt tell me all—thou wilt speak wisdom to my heart—thou only canst lead me to the path of happiness—thy unerring dictates will I follow—thy courageous precepts learn and practise."

At these words I was about to break the seal, when I beheld the Duke De Maurice before me. He viewed me with an eye of levity and contempt; his attitude was familiar, and the words he hallared to pronounce were still more so.

"Ah, charming Marchioness!—I congratulate you on your change of disposition. There was a time when mountain snows were not more cold or

chaste

chaste—when that fair bosom was impreghant to love—and those too beauteous lips unknowed to thy cruelties alone. Now it is far otherwise—every pretty fellow can claim from thee a languishing smile, a tender look—but one more happy than the rest, can press thee in his arms—can drink thy falling tears—can fix an hour to meet thee in secret—and can present you with an amorous billetdoux, to contemplate during the tedious minutes of his absence.—Ah, happy man!" added Maurice, and he fell on one knee before me. "Ah happy man!" he attempted to kiss my hands. I started from my seat.

"My Lord," cried I, almost choak-

ed with indignation, "how dare you intrude thus upon my sollitude!—I am not the guilty wretch thy poisonous breath would taint me with the name of.—That man is a near relation—that man is a friend whom I esteem.—This letter is from a female—it comes from the daughter of Madame De Villeneuf. "Be gone," continued I, looking at him with a degree of haughtiness I did not think myself possessed of, "be gone, my Lord, and never see me more!" I was about to fly the apartment—but the insolent wretch caught hold of my hand.

"Consider, fair Marchioness," cried he, "that you are now in my power—I have proofs that would for ever

blast

blast your fame.—You carry on the matter bravely.—You are pleased to call *my breath* a poisonous one:—take care, lovely Victoria, that you do not find it so!—take care that *this breath, blights not your fair name*!—ah, rather let it utter the softest accents of love! rather let it infuse into thy soul a degree of pity for him, who lives but to adore you—who exists but in the hope, that you will not for ever despise his passion—his unshaken constancy!

During the latter end of this speech, the Duke threw into his eyes all the softness of that passion, for which he pleaded; his fine teeth and well turned mouth, were shewn to the highest advantage. His elegant form was sup-

ported by a large Corinthian pillar well lighted, and though he held me, and that by force, his figure appeared easy, tender, and beseeching. At that time I was really so much enraged, that he seemed to me a hideous monster, sent into the world only to heighten my torments. Reflection, however, in a cooler moment, has shewn him to me, such as he really would have been thought by most other women, a graceful and seducing lover.

"My Lord," replied I, in as cool a manner as I could assume, "the insults I endure from you are really intolerable, and become more frequent every day. If, however, you dare to mention to me again a subject which my

duty

duty forbids me to listen to; I will, at all risks, complain of it to the Marquis De Lausanne."

"By heavens," returned he, "you may publish it to the world! Lausanne's is not the only sword I would engage with, for such a prize.—No, Madam, if every hand was armed to protect you from me, my love should find you out, and offer itself a panting victim at your feet."

I was now provoked beyond all patience—I beheld the Duke De Maurice in a light too odious to describe. I perceived his scheme was to terrify me, with the loss of character, if I did not actually consent to deserve that infamy he hinted by listening to his ad-

addresses. My pride—my virtue resented such vile treatment, and, breaking from him with infinite anger and disdain, I bade him to beware of insulting the daughter of the Duke De Clarence—of insulting the wife of the Marquis De Lausanne—but most of all to beware of exposing his own vanity to a declaration from me, which would at once convince him, that I saw through his artifices, and despised his character. Saying this, I quitted the room with perturbation and disquietude.

I soon after joined the company who were lately in the saloon, and as I leaned over the chair of Madame De Sansoerne, in observing her play, the

Duke

Duke De Maurice approached my ear.

"You are licensed, Madam, to treat me as you think proper — from your lips I can bear every thing they choose to inflict — but let me caution you against beholding more that minion of your favours, — he may enter your house alive, but by heaven he shall never leave it in safety!"

To this insolence of the Duke, I made no reply, and affected to have given it no attention. I however dispatched an excuse this morning to Lindor, for not seeing him as I had promised, but begged of him to meet me at chapel to-morrow morning at eight o'clock, when I must frame some

apo-

apology to him, for not receiving him at my house during his short stay at Paris. Unhappy fate—how can I extricate myself from the difficulties that surround me?

This affair has really so discomposed me, that I have not had leisure to reflect on my other misfortunes. Ah, Luzy!—where-ever thou goest—in what ever dangers thou art immersed—by what perils surrounded—thy Victoria—thy tender, thy constant Victoria will visit thee in idea—will share thy sorrows—will wish them all her own!

Adieu, my Maria—you must plead for me to Lindor when you see him—let him not know the truth—but, ah!

—let

let him not think that I can doubt him less — that I can ever neglect the friend of my earliest days — bid him be assured of my most unchangeable affection.

VICTORIA DE CLARENCE.

VICTORIA *to* MARQUIS.

THE veil of politeness which the Marquis De Lausanne once assumed has of late been entirely thrown off, and he is now either sullen and abrupt, or harsh and petulant. His

pleasures

pleasures (alas, my friend! should that name be given to libertinism?) absorb him wholly, and I have drawn on me the most violent indignation, for daring to remonstrate with him on his manner of living.—I urged the preservation of his health, if he disregarded every other consideration; but I was soon made sensible that weak minds are always the most offended by advice. That remark I have often heard you make—the truth of it, however, I have learned by experience.

Madame La Bert possesses him entirely; she is too abandoned by every moral principle, to regard the censures that are hourly thrown upon her.—They are become the topic of Paris,

and

and their names are never mentioned; but with satire and contempt. As for my part, my dear Maria, his politeness was all I desired—was all that was necessary towards making me happy—and miserable—and even that I am now deprived of.

Lausanne plays—plays high—and as his skill is not equal to his love of gaming, he loses incredible sums. Madame La Bert has drawn him into this new vice—he liked it not, till he became her slave. I certainly was not totally unfortunate while he neither troubled me with his caresses, nor shocked me by reproach. It is now far other wise—he never sees me, but he assumes a countenance almost terrific—nor ever

speaks

ſpeaks but to diſtreſs my ſenſibility. I begged leave, yeſterday, to retire to Lauſanne; but I was peremptorily refuſed—he deſired me to like the place which contained him; and if I did not know how, he would adviſe me to learn; for I ſhould not go without him; and he did not intend to leave Paris for ſome time. I will make no comments upon this ſpeech—you are more at liberty on this occaſion, and you can judge of what I felt, better than my pen can deſcribe.

The Duke De Maurice follows me like my ſhadow—I treat him almoſt ill—I never ſpeak to him, but when the ſtricteſt rules of politeneſs oblige me to it. Notwithſtanding which, he

is

is a constant attendant at my parties —he is an eternal spy upon my actions. The other day I met him at the Marchioness De Sauverre's, I had just returned from the Bois de Boulogne, where I had attended the court on a hunting party, and was still in my riding dress when I called upon the Marchioness. The Duke in a whisper congratulated me on the favour I enjoyed at Versailles, talked much in the praise of the king's judgment, and concluded by asking, whether I remembered the story of La Valiere? My having admired the king's person, and acknowledged that I did, together with my attendance about the Comtesse De Artois, brought on me this sarcasm of

the

the Duke's, to which you may suppose I made no reply, but by look expressive of my contempt.

I see the Comte De Solignac frequently — I fear not to unbosom myself to him — he counsels — he directs me in the paths I should walk, in order to shun the wiles of the Duke De Maurice, but, believe me, I say nothing of the treatment I receive from Lausanne. Weak as my conduct might have appeared to you in my last scene with Luzy, I am cautious of mentioning his name to any one but you, and my respect towards my husband seems to encrease in the eye of every bye-stander. Solignac appears to imagine that I love him. —

Solignac

Bolignac cannot really think so: but he is all delicacy. As for Madame De Sanscerre, she is with me constantly, and sees more of the Marquis's behaviour than I could wish should be exposed even to her. I often surprise her in tears, after any thing has happened that manifests either his folly or ill humour. She is a valuable friend, and I love her sincerely. Adieu, my Maria!

VICTORIA *to* MARIA.

I HAVE just received a summons to attend my dear mother who is very ill.

ill. The Marquis is not in Paris—he is with Madame La Bert in Flanders. —I ſhall go, however, though his anger ſhould be the conſequence. The carriages are getting ready to convey us to Clarencé. Madame De Sanſcerre accompanies me. I will finiſh my letter when I arrive at my fathers.

CLARENCE.

AH, my God, Maria!—what will become of me!—my mother—my dear mother is dangerouſly ill indeed! ſhe hardly knows her Victoria, although I have wept over, and kiſſed her juſt lifeleſs hands. She looked ſtedfaſtly at me for ſome minutes, but turned

from

from me after, without emotion. I cannot proceed—I am too much affected—I will describe my arrival some other time.

As soon as I came within view of Clarence, my heart seemed to die within me—anxious as I had been for revisiting this scene of my happiest days, the miseries I had latterly experienced here, obliterated all remembrance of former pleasures, and I beheld it as the monument of my infidelity to Luzy. A fatal presension too, seized my soul.—The hope of rushing into my parents arms would have been some satisfaction;—but, alas! my mind foreboded, that I should find my father only sensible of my approach. At this

idea, my tears flowed in abundance, and I shed them in the bosom of Madame De Sanfcerre. As I entered the gates, I perceived the domestics who waited at them mournful and pensive: they, however, as I passed, hailed my arrival with some faint demonstrations of joy. When I stepped out of the carriage, all the servants blessed me with tears, and called me the comfort of their future days. As I stood amongst them, my father graciously came out to meet me; his step was solemn, — his countenance severe and melancholy. I threw myself at his feet, and clasped his knees. He raised me with some tenderness, and supported me to his study. — When we got there,

I enquired immediately for my mother.

"Sit down, girl," cried my father, "I will tell you presently." Madame De Sanscerre and I seated ourselves; and my father, after wiping off some tears that fell from his eyes, thus proceeded:

"You will find your mother in that trying situation which calls for fortitude to support.—She is hastening to a better life, and will sooner reach the goal than will your father.—Victoria," added he with a stern voice, "Victoria,"—and the sound died away upon his lips.—I arose to take his hand,—but he pointed once more to the seat, which I had quitted.

"Stay," cried he, "I will ſpeak preſently."—and my father leaned his face upon his arm to hide his grief.—As ſoon as he had a little recovered, he went on.

"Victoria, there is but one action of your mother's life of which ſhe repents—and that is—her having been acceſſary to your marrying a man you did not love"—here his voice faultered again—"but you are happy!—are you not happy, child?"

My father anxiouſly waited for my reply.—Something aroſe in my boſom that prevented articulation—I could not ſpeak.—I again quitted my ſeat, and threw myſelf on my knees before him. "Are you not happy?" repeated

ed my father. "Oh! yes, yes, sir," answered I, "happy, if my being so, can make my mother live—can make my father easy," and a violent gush of woe hindered my saying more. My father raised me to his arms.

"These tears, Victoria!—ah, why those tears?—your friend, too!—ah, Madam," cried he, taking the hand of Madame De Sanscerre, "explain why these tears should be such ready comers, if her husband treats her as my fond wishes hope?"

Madame De Sanscerre replied not but by a shrug of her shoulders, and an averted face. My father quitted his seat abruptly.

"By heaven," exclaimed he, "she

is miserable!—and that by my cruelty!"—At these words, he left the room in an agony of passion.

Some minutes after, my mother's woman came to tell me that she was awake, and had enquired if I was come.—This was sufficient—and I hastened to her chamber. As soon as I entered, I perceived her sitting up in her bed, assisted by pillows—her dear revered face—ah, my Maria, how altered!—it was pale and melancholy. Her head was supported by one hand, and her eyes fixed upon a picture of the blessed Virgin, which she held in the other. When I beheld her reverend form, I flew to the bed-side, and threw myself on my knees before her

in a flood of anguiſh. My mother turned her eyes from the picture, and placed them on me: my tears fell upon the hand I had ſeized, and I called upon her by the names of mother—friend—and comforter.—My mother anſwered not—ſhe did not know me! My God, Maria!—can I deſcribe to you my ſenſations in thoſe moments!—impoſſible. My mother ſoon after ſunk her head upon a pillow, and dropt aſleep. My agitation obliged me to leave the apartment, leſt my ſobs ſhould have diſturbed her repoſe. It was in that interval I writ the firſt few lines dated from hence. When I laid down my pen, I ſtole ſoftly into my mother's room, and took my ſeat at the foot of

her bed. She did not awake for ſome hours, nor could I be prevailed on to leave her. When ſhe ſtirred, I advanced towards her, and aſked her if ſhe knew me?—ſhe looked at me ſtedfaſtly.

"Yes, yes"—ſhe cried, "it is the well known form of my injured child! if thou art really her," added ſhe, in a feeble tone, "ah forgive me for the only act of unkindneſs I ever forced on you!—If thou art but her ſhade—reproach me not with her wrongs—for my Victoria's ſelf would treat me with greater lenity. Ah, my God!" continued ſhe claſping her hands together. "ah, my God! what a ſacrifice did ſhe make to duty—did duty exact from her?

Vic-

Victoria — Victoria!" she exclaimed, and again sunk on her pillow—I threw myself on the bed and wept aloud.

"Ah, my mother!—you never injured me — you were always good to your Victoria—you have made her happy—and she comes to bless you for it. —Think no more of the sacrifice you mentioned—it was only a momentary struggle—it is now over, and I regret it no further."

My mother once more raised herself in her bed, she listened to me with the most cautious attention—her features brightened as I spoke,—a gentle glow overspread her dying face.

"Blessed Virgin," cried my mother with uplifted hands and eyes; "dear

and spotless lady,—in your intercession I have confided—receive the warmest thanks my poor heart can give—to thy protection I commend my child—offer her to my crucified Lord—and beg of him to defend her from the perils of a worldly life.—Ah, had I before reflected on the modest merit of Luzy!—alas!—poor Luzy!" and she rested her weary head upon my bosom.—Now, my friend, look on thy suffering Victoria, and pity her poignant sensibility.

My dear mother from that moment, my Maria, has been herself no longer: a fatal stupor, which bespeaks the approach of death, hath fastened on her, and she is at once regardless of hus-

band,

band, child, and friend. I have quitted her chamber for a few minutes to conquer the extreme force of my affliction, which seems to disturb my father's silent and awful sorrow. I must now, however, beg leave to return to her pillow, where I will endeavour to stifle my sobs, my heart-rending sighs.—Ah, my mother—my ever dear—my tender, sympathizing parent!

Madame DE SANSCERRE *to* MARIA.

TO you, my dear Villeneauf, I will make no apologies for beginning a correspondence with the sadest ti-

dings a pen can relate.—Suffice it to ſay, I write of thy beautiful, thy ſuffering Victoria; and to her misfortunes thy ear and heart are ever open.

The Dutcheſs De Clarence lived but a few hours after the concluſion of the Marchioneſs De Lauſanne's laſt paragraph. She however regained her ſenſes an hour before her death, and employed that time in receiving the laſt rites of the church—in taking leave of her huſband—and in the tendereſt adieus to her injured child. She embraced Madame De Lauſanne with much affection—ſhe held before her, the pictures of the Comte De Luzy, and that of our immaculate Lady.

"Here, my daughter," cried ſhe,

"at

"at the moment I offer you the portrait of a lover, I present you with that of chastity itself. Let your friendship alone be given to the first — but let your whole heart be devoted to the other. — These," continued she, "are faint resemblances of what we love — of what we revere — but they serve to remind us — that Lucy was the most amiable of all lovers — that the Virgin Mary was the most pure of all women."

She then prayed fervently for the happiness, for the preservation of her daughter's virtue; and throwing herself into her arms, leaned her head upon her bosom, and breathed her last sigh, without a groan — without one struggle.

It

It is now a difficult task to say more—to describe to you the warm—the sensible sorrow of a tender and dutiful child for the loss of a parent ever admirable as a wife—ever amiable as a mother. She was absorbed in affliction, yet she endeavoured to conquer it, in order to speak consolation to her wretched father—whose agonies no tongue—no pen can ever delineate.

I am sorry to be obliged to add that the Duke was that night seized with very alarming symptoms.—He grew worse for three days successively, and he now lies so ill as to be despaired of by all his physicians. The Marchioness is at times almost frantic with despair—she kneels and bedews the

corse

corse of her fond mother with her tears—she invokes her to pray for the preservation of the only comfort she has left—then with a face of affected composure, she returns to her place behind her father's pillow.

The poor man, insensible to every thing but the injury he has done her, and the horror of death, loses, in asking her pardon, those moments in which, by an upright resignation to the will of heaven, he could assist her youth by offering her the supporting advice of a dying parent. The Duke De Clarence is, I fear, drawing very near his end, and in that minute of distress, she will in fact lose the only friend of whom the Marquis De Lausanne stands in awe

He

He will then prove more openly his love of libertiniſm—and his lovely wife will ſeel, too ſeverely, the ſacrifice ſhe made to filial duty in favour of the moſt abandoned of his ſex.

The Marchioneſs has ſent to deſire my attendance in the Duke's apartment —my fears prophecy a thouſand horrible incidents.

Twelve o'clock at night.

IT is all over with the Duke, my dear Maria—he died in the tender arms of his daughter, who ſoothed, in thoſe dreadful moments, the pangs and terrors of the grim tyrant. —She is, at preſent, in a ſituation that beggars even

clo-

eloquence. She will not consent to leave Clarence until the funeral is over. The Duke and Dutchess are to be interred in the family vault on the same day.

I will make no apology for quitting this subject so abruptly. — I must fly to our dear Victoria, who stands in need of all my friendship — of all my consolation.

Yours ever, my dear Villeneauf,

JULIA DE SANSCERRE.

Vic-

VICTORIA *to* MARIA.

I AM but just recovered from a severe illness which has confined me six weeks. Death has been very busy about me for some time past—he has at length spared the only object that I could have wished him to have taken, and instead of her life, has robbed her of the comfort—of the sanction of beloved parents. My dear Maria! —what pangs have I not endured since I writ to thee last!

The cruel Marquis would not let me stay at Clarence till the funeral obsequies were performed. He came down to chide me for having, as he called it,

so

so silly an intention, and desired me to prepare to go with him back to Paris.

You have always told me, my Maria, that we could oftener command our feelings, than we were willing to endeavour for. In the bitterness of that moment I thought of you.—Overwhelmed as I was with sorrow at the idea of parting for ever from the object in the world, I held most dear, though cold and inanimate—to go with a man whom I neither loved or respected—a man from whom I could expect no consolation for the heart-breaking calamity that had befallen me—nay, on the contrary, one whose insensibility, or whose romantic soul would either

cause

cause him to deride or insult my sorrow: —tormented, I say, as I was with these cruel ideas — I appeared to acquiesce with resignation to his will—and I consented without expostulation, to accompany him whithersoever he pleased.

The Marquis seemed surprised at my condescension—he looked at the same time as if he was not contented with his having given me, to all appearance, so little dissatisfaction. He bit his lips —he seemed to pause for a few moments; at length, pretending to recollect an engagement upon business for the next morning in Paris—he said, *he must absolutely set out that minute.*

It was now, my dear Maria, ten o'clock at night.—I was really exhausted

d by grief and fatigue, and wholly unable to take such a journey,—I therefore besought him to let me rest that night—promising to follow him the ensuing day.—He flew into a most violent rage.—*Cursed delicacy—cursed affectation—his life was embittered by my whims—by my caprice—he would set off that instant—and I might either follow him, or stay for ever from him—just as best suited my inclination.*

At these words I hid my face in the bosom of Madame De Sanscerre—and in spite of my resolution, I burst into an agony of tears.

The coach was at the door in a moment.—I arose—I was hastening to take one farewel embrace of my dear

father

father and mother—to breathe out one ardent prayer for their repose, at the feet of their coffins; when the inhuman man laid hold of my arm, and exclaimed, "do you intend, Madam, to accompany me or not?"

I assured him I would attend him after having taken an eternal adieu of my beloved parents.

"By the great God," cried he almost hoarse with passion, "you shall not stir—the carriage is ready—step into it; or I shall go without you—and if so—never will I behold you more."

"My Lord," replied I, "when I tell you that to take a last view of my tender mother—of my dear father—will be to me in some measure a consolation

—surely

—surely your goodness will suffer me to indulge myself in it!—your humanity cannot refuse me such a trifling comfort!"

"No," returned he, —"you shall not overcome me thus by argument—the case is clearly this—if you choose to oblige me—give me your hand directly to convey you to the carriage—if not—remain here for ever."

The Marquis turned from me in a phrenzy—I paused—the affair, however, required no consideration—it was evident that to support the character of a good wife—to fullfil the vow of obedience I made at the altar—my will must ever be subservient to his caprices;—I therefore, with a sigh, entreat-

ed

ed him to be calm, assured him of my being ready to go with him when ever he thought fit, and stepping to the door, ordered my woman to prepare to attend us immediately to town: this done, I went into the great hall, where the Marquis and Sanscerre were assembled, and we waited there some minutes before every thing was ready.

I will not omit to mention to you one circumstance that affected me much; it was an odd one—the remembrance of it makes me weep.

As we were detained there for Nannette and the little parcel with my night cloaths which she had orders to bring with her, my father's old favourite spaniel crawled towards me,

and

and laying himself at my feet, gave a deep groan.—I stooped down to caress him—I called him by his name—he heard me not—that groan was his last.

Poor Zephyr! cried the old butler, with tears falling from his eyes, you and I have looked on happy days—they are all passed now—and you have died in good time!

I could have given way to some bursts of grief—but I thought of your remark—and suppressing my sensibility, I hurried into the coach—where, under the darkness of the night, I succeeded in concealing the real poignancy of my sorrow.

Tell me, my Maria, if you do not

 think

think I have had some trials to contend with?

After travelling about twenty miles, I found myself incapable of proceeding further — an universal faintness overspread my frame; I sunk upon the shoulder of my friend Sanscerre.—the Marquis, I believe, was terrified: he ordered his servants to stop at the next village, where I lay the remainder of the night in an uneasy bed, and a room so small and cold, as to afford me but very little rest. I was awakened early in the morning to proceed on my journey, which I undertook with no pleasure—but with a visibly encreasing indisposition. When we arrived at Paris, I was taken extremely

tremely ill — and I am at present so weak and languid from all I have endured, as to be scarcely able to hold my pen.

Madame De Sanfcerre has never left me. The Comte De Solignac has often called to make the most friendly enquiries after my health. I have sent to beg his company in my dressing room this evening.—I will own to you, I desire to speak to him on a subject which I once firmly intended never to mention to him more: but my dear mother, in her dying moments, presented me with the portrait of the Comte De Luzy—I wish not to keep it—my mother knew not how dear his image was still to my bosom—she offered it to me

as a remembrancer of an inestimable friend, whom she had ever prized as such—and to whom I owed some esteem. I have, however, consulted my religion—my reason upon it; they both condemn my keeping in possession the picture of a man, who must ever appear to me in the light of a dangerous insinuating lover.—My heart rebels against the severity of this determination—but my poor heart must conquer all its weaknesses—or break in the attempt. I listen not to it—I pay no regard to its soft complainings—I consider it as a treacherous friend—as a dangerous pleader—the image of Luzy is sufficiently impressed upon it—it need not desire more. Ah, it is

not an inanimate portrait that is there painted?—he breathes—he lives—he speaks himself!

I have seen Solignac—he received from me the picture with sighs and reluctance. He bade me keep it—for he believed it was all that remained of his friend.—I started—he seemed sorry for what had escaped him—he took it however—but would explain himself no farther. What could he mean, my Maria?—perhaps it was an artifice to induce me not to part with the charming portrait!

The Marquis has entirely forsaken Madame La Bert; who has, it seems, suffered so cruelly by his neglect, that forgetting all her other suitors, she

has retired to a convent where she proposes to end her days in sorrow and repentance. Poor Madame La Bert! I will not at present intrude on her retirement, lest she should impute it to a far different cause from that which must inspire me to visit her. Some weeks hence I will go to her convent —I will encourage her repentance—I I will weep over her misfortune, and endeavour to console her for it.

Adieu, my Maria!—forget not that I am

Most Yours.

Vic-

VICTORIA to MARIA.

I TOLD you in my last of my intention to visit Madame La Bert; I went to her convent yesterday, and will give you the particulars of our conversation.

I would not tell my name, but desired one of the sisters to say, "a friend of hers would be glad to speak with her." I did not wait long—Madame La Bert appeared—she is, at present, only a pensioner in the house—I therefore saw her without restraint. As soon as she entered, I could perceive that

the ſight of me affected her highly: —ſhe bluſhed—ſhe trembled—ſhe heſitated. I appeared not to obſerve her confuſion—but advanced towards her, and ſaluted her with much freedom and friendſhip. The poor Woman recovered herſelf, in ſome degree, from the unaffected eaſe of my deportment: ſhe wiped the tears from her eyes—and paid me in return ſome polite and agreeable compliments. She condoled with me upon the ſable dreſs I wore, and heaved many ſighs on ſeeing me affected at the ſad occaſion of my aſſuming it.

"Ah, Madam," ſhe at length exclaimed, "happy had it been for me had my parents lived to inſpect and

watch over my education!—their child would not now be the prey of cruel remorse—the only object in the world, who could injure amiableness like yours!—That I have injured you—is too true—that I do repent sincerely of it—is also a truth. I do not merit the honour of a visit from you. You may be a stranger to my guilt—but I can never consent to abuse you further by suffering you to remain in an error so fatal to my peace—so prejudicial to your honour. You must not repeat this favour, Madam;" continued she, in a flood of tears, "my character is no longer an innocent one—the world will talk, should you renew your intimacy with me—and the chastity of your

fame would be blackened by your friendſhip for me. Ah, my God!" continued Madame La Bert, "what puniſhment do I not deſerve! — yet I will not merit more, by pretending innocence, and ſuffering you, moſt beautiful, moſt excellent lady, to continue your eſteem for me.—Enter not theſe walls again, until I prove myſelf a penitent magdalen indeed — until I can invite you to behold me about to reſign the world, and all its allurements — until, worn by faſting, prayer, and hardſhip, I ſhall in ſome meaſure have expiated the enormity of thoſe crimes for which I deſerve to ſuffer."

At theſe words, Madame La Bert covered her face with her hand, and the

the tears trickled in large drops through her fair and slender fingers. As for my part I wept with her—I endeavoured to comfort her—I bade her not to despond; to consider that God was very merciful, and never rejected the sigh of a penitent—the tears of a contrite heart. I bewailed with her the unhappy credulity of our sex—I inveighed against the too cruel arts of the other, which were ever practised with impunity against our weakness. I assured her she should always command my friendship—that I never offered it to her before—because she stood in no need of consolation till now—but as it was *now* required—I hoped I was incapable of withholding it from her. I

Madame La Bert viewed me with eyes of astonishment — she could not express her feelings—she seized my hand —she carried it with wildness to her lips.

"Ah," she exclaimed, "the cruel—the barbarous Marquis!—he has robbed me not only of virtue—but of peace for ever!"

"My dear Madam," cried I, "are they not synonymous terms? be persuaded there is but one way of regaining the latter—and that can only be, by living up to those sentiments of piety and religion, which heaven has now been pleased to inspire your heart with."

I will not repeat the effusions of her gratitude,

gratitude, in return for a mere nothing, a mere charitable visit, which gave me more pleasure than it could have conferred on her, since it afforded me an opportunity of beholding the most edifying example in the world; and of being convinced that the heart of this unfortunate woman was sincerely touched with a just sense of her dangerous way of life. People, I believe, thought her more abandoned than she really was; she had great vivacity—was a free talker—and had a degree of coquetry in her disposition, which rendered her the object of every man's attention. She is very pretty too;—a circumstance I never before observed until I beheld her in the amiable light she appeared yesterday.

terday. I will own to you her former carriage was too assured—too indelicate to allow me to see her with unprejudiced eyes—she was, however, always talked of as a great beauty.

You will perhaps suppose that the Marquis having got rid of this engagement is more at home; and is become domestic:—but there you will sadly mistake; he now pays his devoirs to the celebrated Le Blanc, who is the handsomest—the most extravagant—and the most elegant Courtezan in all Paris.

Yesterday, as I was returning from the convent which immures the unhappy La Bert, my carriage was driven violently against by another—and in such a manner as to prevent either from

pro-

proceeding. I was terrified, and looked out—when I perceived the Marquis and this unfortunate creature in the chariot, which impeded my way: at that moment I heard a general cry in the street, *that it was the Marchioness De Lausanne, who was in the most imminent danger*; and the Duke De Henrie, with many other young noblemen, who were standing at the door of an hotel which I passed, ran round and persuaded me to a light until the carriages should be disengaged. I immediately gave my hand to the Duke, and was by him conducted into the house of a Bourgeoise, where the gentlemen clustered about me, to veil from my sight the disagreeable view of my husband leading

forth

forth Mademoiselle. I confess it gave me some pleasure to observe, upon re-entering my carriage, hers lying entirely neglected by every one but her own attendants; whilst all seemed anxious to place mine in its former security. A wheel which had been torn off from hers, still lay upon the ground; mine, that had suffered in the same manner, was entirely set to rights, and that almost instantaneously.

I affected not to know whose chariot it was, nor who were in it; I therefore begged the Duke, if he was acquainted with the persons to whom the carelessness of my coachman had caused such an injury, to assure them I was sorry for it, and hoped they would ac-

cept

cept of my compliments. He smiled, and bowing upon my hand, *entreated me to believe, he would act on the occasion like one who considered my politeness as his own.* I ordered my people to distribute money amongst the obliging croud, and returned home through loud acclamations of applause. The worst, or, if you will, the best of it was, that I saw Mademoiselle le Blanc in a house just opposite to where my carriage stood when I entered it—so that she and her Suivante had the mortification to behold me an object of contempt to the multitude, whilst they both experienced their contempt and neglect.

So certain it is, that the appearance of a woman of virtue, will always com-

mand

is ſteeled by duty, and has already loved one ſo much ſuperior to him in all that can engage the tenderneſs of woman?

Madame De Sanſcerre is gone to her Villa near Paris.—Ah, that Villa!—what a ſcene!—but I will ſtay my impetuous pen,—Dear Maria, need I repeat that, whilſt I have life, I muſt be devoted to you?

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE.

VICTORIA *to* MARIA.

THE Duke De Maurice is returned to Paris, and the ſtrong marks of grief which were ſaid to be expreſsed on his countenance, and in his behaviour, have fled like clouds before the appearance of the ſun.

He is gay, aſſured, and gallant—he ſpeaks of love, like one certain of ſucceſs—and paints to me his paſſion in every look and word:—to be ſhort,—he is troubleſome and highly diſagreeable.

I was yeſterday in waiting on Madame

dame D' A****s at court, when the Comte D' A****s and the Duke De Maurice made their appearance. I was in conversation with some of the ladies. —The Comte and the Duke, who had shewn themselves in the circle, retired from it, and joined us.

"You are too charming this morning, Madame De Lausanne!" cried the Comte with a polite air, and a tender look; "you outshine in beauty," added he in a whisper, "every other woman, the Queen not excepted."—I curtsied. —"By my faith," continued he, "Madame D' A****s does not act prudently in keeping so near her person the loveliest woman in France:—she must be vain to suppose, that she will

claim

claim adoration on those days that you are in waiting.'

The Comte played with my fan—and in taking it from my hand, he contrived to press my fingers.—I said little—I received his flattery with a polite indifference—he perceived it—and leaning on the Duke's arm, said in a voice just loud enough for me to hear, "this Madame De Lausanne is, I find, one of those cruel beauties who can behold the agonies they cause, without feeling even compassion.—There is a something in her eyes, which awes me into silence.—Tell her, however, my dear Maurice, that a Prince loves her, who will only value that title, as he can confer glory and power on her.

The

The Comte, after this speech, retired to some distance, and the Duke approached me. He smiled in my face.

"Madam, you have heard the commission I am charged with from the Comte?"

"Yes, my Lord," cried I, "I have. The Comte is excusable in giving you such a one, to a woman of whose principles he knows nothing:—you, however, have not the like apology in the acceptance of it to make;—but if you are to learn it now, be assured yourself, and tell your Prince, that I am not the creature you and he take me for: that I owe too much love and duty to my husband ever to receive with pleasure such declarations from any other man."

man." I ſaid this with an air of anger and reſerve, and walking from him placed myſelf too near Madame D'A****s to ſuffer ſuch impertinence again during my ſtay in the drawing room.

The Comte D'A****s is very handſome—is very witty—and could my heart be endangered by the converſation of any other man but Luzy, the Comte D'A****s would be the moſt likely perſon to ſet me on my guard—but he is as much inferior to Luzy, as he is ſuperior to every other.—Do you not deſpiſe the Duke De Maurice?

The Marquis, I perceive, is ruining himſelf with play, and his extravagant generoſity to Mademoiſelle Le Blanc.—It is at her houſe he games

so highly — and if I am not misinformed he is always a considerable loser. His estate of Belfont has been sold to defray a debt of honour to the Chevalier D'Elbeu, who is a man notorious for living by the ruin of others. The Marquis looked a little serious upon it for an hour or two — but a note from his Sultana soon dispelled every cloud, and he hastened to receive consolation from her — or rather — to be induced to sell a few more of his estates, in order that she and her followers should gain by his folly. She has, I am told, a new equipage for almost every day in the year — that her cloaths are sumptuous, and that her jewels are as fine as mine. She lives in a

style

ſtyle hardly to be equalled—and her houſe is the reſort of all the libertine youth of faſhion. The Marquis De Lauſanne is, however, above ſuſpicion—he cannot ſuppoſe it poſſible, that a woman whom he has once addreſſed, ſhould ever prove herſelf unworthy of that honour—it never enters the poor Marquis's head, that, amongſt the profuſion of his gifts, there may be a certain void in the heart of a courtezan which he never, with all his merit, can ſupply. He does not dream that this void muſt be filled by variety—by the moſt aſſiduous and ſlaviſh attention—by new conqueſts—and, in fine, by the indulgence of every caprice. Had the Marquis leſs money—was he not repu-

ted and known to be one of the richeſt noblemen in France—Mademoiſelle Le Blanc would ſince have deſerted him for a ſuperior fortune; but as that is not eaſy to be found, ſhe contents herſelf in paying homage to him, until the poor man ſhall have paid too dear a debt to her charms and avarice—until he really ruins himſelf for ever in fortune and in health.

I often viſit Madame La Bert, who really appears a ſincere penitent. She wept the other day in ſpeaking of the Marquis, and ſwelled with indignation when ſhe informed me, that he had quitted her for Mademoiſelle Le Blanc. I will own to you I wondered how ſhe could mention him—and ſtill more how

her

her delicacy could ſtart ſuch a ſubject to me,—her anger to, when ſhe mentioned Mademoiſelle Le Blanc!—but, thank heaven, I was not cenſorious in my conjectures! and had reaſon ſoon after to believe by her behaviour that *that* reſentment was only the laſt ſtruggle of an expiring flame which ſhe was gaining virtue ſufficient to abhor.

Madame De Sanſcerre is really a true and affectionate friend — ſhe ſeldom leaves me but on occaſions which demand her preſence at home—ſhe rallies the Marquis charmingly — and very often makes him look ſillier than is abſolutely natural to him:—he, however, takes her pleaſantry with good humour, though he dares not return it.

She asked him, the other day, in her lively manner, whether he did not think his wife the most beautiful woman in the universe?—he smiled—she ran and took my hand, and led me to him. "Here is a shape!—an air!—a face!—a hand and arm!—heaven and earth, man!—do but view her with attention."

The Marquis, who was sitting down, looked up at me, and smiled again.

"Come, come," cried she with impatience, "answer me."

The Marquis pulled me on his knee.

"Why, Madam," replied he, "you shall have my opinion.—My wife is certainly the most perfect both in form

and

and face of any woman I ever saw;—but I cannot be contented with that alone.—She is witty too, I believe—very well.—This I take upon trust—for I never saw her chearful.—She is warm, sensible and loving—at least I have heard, that she once loved with ardour.—All that is very well too.—Her husband never experiences from her these proofs of sensibility.—Thus, Madam," added he, "I may be said to have the most charming Woman in the world in my possession—when in truth—I find her only a very beautiful statue.—Such a behaviour I cannot brook—in short if she loved me—she would act differently—and perhaps if I was not her husband—I should like her better."

This, my dear Maria, was a very heavy charge against me—notwithstanding I defended myself very tolerably. —I protested that he could be no judge of my affection for him, for that he never gave me the pleasure of his company at home, but in a large circle.—I turned his weapons at last so effectually upon himself, that he was brought to acknowledge he might have made a better husband.—In fine, I invited him to sup with me the next night, and promised him amusement. — We parted very good friends that evening; but I perceived he attended his usual appointment with Le Blanc after all this conversation.

The next night came—I dressed with

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an easy elegance which really became my features, and which I had succeeded in that day better than ever! my company was formed of the most agreeable women of fashion, and of men not inferior to them in wit and brilliancy. After the dishes were removed, an extreme fine band of music which I had ordered to be prepared in the next room struck up, and after they had played some time, every lady gave an Italian air accompanied by a Piano forte, and a German flute—then a French one—then an English one, out of the opera of Artaxerxes. Their voices were all fine—their accompanyments admirable!—wit—mirth—and the most delicate pleasure seemed to possess every

heart, but that of the Marquis, who endeavoured, through politeness, to conceal his restlessness — but I could plainly perceive that his situation was uneasy to him, and that decency prevented his leaving it. I do assure you, my dear Maria, I studied to give him delight—to charm—to inspire him with love; I even forgot Luzy for the night —or, at least, I strove to banish his idea from my bosom.—I considered, that if, through any coldness or neglect in my behaviour towards him, my husband gave himself up to libertinism —I must stand condemned before the tribunal of God and man. The thought shocked me—and I called forth all my graces—made use of every insinu-

ation

ation every becoming artifice to make him suppose himself beloved, and to draw him most powerfully to me alone. I consented to sing at his request—I exerted my voice, and filled the room with the softest sounds I was mistress of. Solignac took up the flute—he accompanied me in a touching and masterly manner. I sang of love—I expressed it not only by my lips—I fixed my eyes on Lausanne—I made them speak more tenderly. The Marquis was struck—he viewed me with an air of exultation and astonishment—he returned every thing I had suffered myself to say, in a language no less strong no less intelligent. It grew late—the company was dispersing—a billet was given to

the Marquis—he retired to read it—his carriage was ordered — I saw no more of him that night. The next day he writ me a gallant letter—he thanked me for the delightful evening he had passed—was sorry he could not come to make his adieus in person—prayed me to accept them then—for he was just setting out on a little tour to Flanders, from whence he should not return for some weeks. — Shall I tell you that I was sorry?—oh, no!—my heart will not allow me to write a falsehood—but this I will assure you that I lamented his infatuation—that I pitied the depravity of his morals.—After that I need not add—Le Blanc was of his party.

Some weeks have elapsed since I laid

down

down my pen.—The Marquis returned a few days ago. He has since endeavoured to be polite—nay, sometimes exerted himself to appear tender—my manner was uniformly so to him—but Le Blanc—in fine, Le Blanc is his mistress—I unfortunately less charming, because I am his wife.

We are to have an elegant ball in Paris this evening given by the officers of Be****k's regiment—the Duke De F,***** always elegant, will, I suppose, outshine himself on this occasion.—He is very handsome—and as witty as he is charming. Madame De Sanscerre says he shall be her cecibeo for the evening—he is a gallant man—well received by the ladies, and is a general

favourite

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favourite amongst them. I shall go to oblige Sanscerre, but am determined neither to dance or to stay there long. —Farewel my Maria—continue to love me.

VICTORIA *to* MARIA.

I REJOICE to hear that Madame De Villeneauf is able to be removed to Belvoir—her estate of that name is a little Paradise—and the air will, I trust, prove salutary to her. You say she mentions me with affection, and de-

sires

fires me to hope for a better change when it shall please heaven to appoint. Tell my dear and revered Monitress that I endeavour to assume courage, and to gain by dissipation a thoughtlessness of mind which alone can preserve me from despair.—Remembrance will, however, obtrude its busy self even in those hours of noise and folly, and embitter every scene. Tell her, however, I am not wanting in my efforts to conquer it—religion instructs me to do so—how I succeed heaven, who witnesses my bitter tears, can tell.—I will turn to another subject, my dear Maria.—I left you in my last to prepare for a ball.

I called upon Madame De Sanscerre

at the appointed hour, and we went thither together. The Comte D' A****s's carriage had just driven off before mine drew up—he did us the honour of staying to hand us from it—he whispered as he led me in—that he intended to attach himself to me for the night. "I shall," continued he, "be at your elbow constantly.—Do you dance?"—I told him no—he entreated—I pleaded indisposition—he declared then, that he would not be prevailed on either, to partake of that amusement, and he kept his word. The Duke De F**** met us at the door of the ball room—he was elegantly dressed—and with many of the other officers conducted us to seats.

The

The assembly was very brilliant—but was too public—the Duke De Maurice was there masked—he followed me about all night as a spy—he listened to every thing the Comte D' A****s said to me—and in fact he heard several tender things on his part. I behaved with my usual reserve, and with as much indifference as I really felt. He had taken my fan from my hand—but by some accident it fell from his, and the outward stick was a little damaged.—He put it in his bosom, and vowed I should never have it more. I was taking some refreshments which the Duke De F**** had presented me with,—I pulled off my glove, and believe me, it was stolen immediately

by

by I know not whom. My ſpy (the maſk) was very near me at that time —ſo were the Comte D'A****s, the Duke De F**** and the Chevalier De Mondonoir.—The theft was amongſt them—they all denied it—but I perceived a ſmile from the Comte D'A****s's countenance which made me ſuſpect him.—In ſhort, during my ſtay at the ball, he was never one moment from my ſide—and my ſtay was longer than I had intended it ſhould be. There were a number of maſks there —amongſt the reſt was one who entertained the company highly.—Some ſuſpected it to be the Marquis De Palmene—others Monſieur De Louvoi—but I perceived—or at leaſt thought I perceived

ceived, too much of a female voice to believe it to be either. I remarked it to the Comte D'A****s—he was struck with the conceit, for the mask wore the habit of a friar—and was really witty, satirical and polite. The Marquis De Lausanne came in with a lady masked—he wore none himself, but appeared in the most becoming dress and style I had ever observed him to assume. The friar on seeing him and his lady approached them with a grave and priestly air.

"Child," said he to Mademoiselle Le Blanc, "I am concerned to see thee so free with the Marquis De Lausanne for two reasons."

"What are they, father?" cried Le

Blanc.

Blanc. "First," replied the friar, "because to be arm in arm with him implies a scandal to your character—for no woman of virtue was ever seen so familiar with him—not even his wife."

Here I blushed—the Comte D'A****s pressed my hand.

"Secondly, because if you really are not lost to sentiment—and should happen to entertain an unfeigned tenderness for him—he will soon give you reason to repent your fondness by dismissing you with ignominy,—and forgetting your ever having conferred a favour on him.—Such is the character of him, whom you seem to regard as your lover."

The

The Marquis looked offended. "And who are you," exclaimed he in a rage, "that dares under the veil of"——

"Hold, hold!" replied the friar, "all is fair under a mask; if you think not—be silent now—but avenge these wrongs another time;—however, you had better not be angry at all, for I have some advice to give you in your turn."

"I want none of it," cried the Marquis.

"Ah, my Lord," said the good father, "where is your politeness?—hear me out at least."

The Marquis sullenly complied.

"Now," resumed the friar, "here is a lady whom I have often seen with

thee my son—I have sometimes met her with thee in a blazing chariot—at other times I have beheld her reclining on your shoulder, or supported by your arm—now, my son, the world says you have married the handsomest woman in France: — the world is censorious—though for my part, to judge the best—I suppose this lady to be your wife—and that poor neglected creature who beholds you with anxiety and tenderness—whom every one talks so highly of—whom I have never seen with you, is a mistress."

Here the room resounded with applause—but as I pitied the Marquis—and really felt a good deal for my own situation—I gave my hand to Soligny,

who

who conveyed me to my carriage unperceived by the rest, who were so much engrossed by the friar as not to be sensible for some moments of my departure. Madame De Sanscerre, however, who staid until the dawn of day, listening to the gallant compliments of her handsome partner, concluded for me the conversation of the friar. The Marquis whispered him, *that he expected to see him the next day in another habit—a habit which would entitle him to treat him as he deserved.*

"This sanctified dress, sir," continued he, "though but assumed in jest—has something in it which checks my rage.—To-morrow I will ask for vengeance."

"You

"You shall have it, child," replied the friar, "you shall strip from this head its reverend tonsure—you shall buffet one cheek, and I will turn the other—yet—if the man should at length overcome in me that spiritual sense of meekness which I hope ever to preserve—if, however, I should from the frailty of human nature be tempted to return your resentment—my first blows will be dealt—not for myself—they shall bear with them, the injuries of Madame De Lausanne—my second shall be given for the unfortunate—unpitied—forgotten La Bert—and the third shall remind you, that a reptile once trod on can turn in hopes of vengeance."

The

The Marquis turned from him in indignation—and the Comte D'A****s followed the priest.

"You are but a young piece of divinity I believe," said the Comte to him, as he got him into a corner of the room, deserted by all but Madame De Sanscerre and Solignac; "you are, however, father, the most agreeable of your order I ever conversed with."

"Ah, son," replied the friar, "People see at court very differently from those in the world:—were you to behold me in my convent, you would turn off—and leave my sober lessons for a less fashionable hearer—but at a masquerade I find a friar can be more attended to, than a blooming girl of

Patmos—and that by a prince, who is well known to be a man of gallantry."

Here the Comte laughed out.

"Father," ſaid he, "ſuffer me to crave your bleſſing, and prayers for the reformation of Verſailles—but firſt allow me to kiſs that holy hand."

The wary prieſt would not conſent to this ſalutation, which was only meant to try by the ſoftneſs and delicate form of the hand, whether it was a man or woman who perſonated the character. The refuſal, however, convinced the Comte of its being a female, and he told her in a low voice of his conjecture—and if ſhe did not ſhew him her face in private there—he would take an opportunity of making her unmaſk

ſome-

ſomewhere elſe. This ſeemed to alarm the fictitious friar, who diſappeared very ſoon after in ſpite of the Comte D' A****s's vigilance.—So much for the eccleſiaſtic—whom every body ſpeaks of—but no one is certain who, or what he is.

The next morning I received, from the Comte D' A****s, a very polite billet, to enquire after my health, and at the ſame time the moſt beautiful fan I ever ſaw; which he begged my acceptance of in exchange for the one he had taken from me the night before. There is a motto of diamonds on the ſticks in theſe few expreſſive words, ("*Je vous aime.*") The preſent is very magnificent, and worthy of the donor.

The Marquis De Lausanne looked displeased as I shewed him the fan and the billet; he asked what they were to him? and throwing them on my toilette, he quitted the room. Poor man! —I could not help the friar's speaking plain truth!

It is now, my dear Maria, six months since the Comte De Luzy embarked for Martinico — and no tidings have reached Solignac of his arrival.—I do not suffer myself to think the worst—oh, no!—I will suppose him lazy—indifferent—conquered perhaps by the beauties of some young—ah my God! —I will even imagine *that* in preference to his being lost for ever! Adieu my dear Maria.

The

The Marquis DE LAUSANNE, *to Monsieur* DE MONTVILLE.

I HAVE lost a considerable sum once more, dear Montville, to the Chevalier D'Elben. All my ready money is exhausted, and my estate at Belfont has been sold to pay a former honourable demand. — Poor Le Blanc is inconsolable — for the losses have happened at her house. I will not leave her, lest she should suspect my being obliged to part with another estate, which would shock her tenderness. I therefore offer you the seat of Clarence, which you wish to possess, on those

terms I formerly mentioned to you; and to which you agreed. It will affect Madame De Lausanne, perhaps, to part with a place to which she has been attached from her infancy—but I cannot think of selling either of the estates which my father left me—until I cannot help myself—they are valuable to me, more from their being admired by my charming mistress, than for any other reason—and I can not think of distressing her to indulge a caprice of my wife's. Adieu, dear Montville—I am at present a little low spirited—a better run of luck to night will, however, set all to rights again—and one look—one smile from Le Blanc will make me forget every disagreeable

ble sensation.—I write from her chateau ten miles from Paris.—If you wish to speak to me on the subject of Clarencè, my carriage shall attend you hither—for I cannot think of going to town for some days at least.

Yours ever,

DE LAUSANNE.

Monsieur DE MONTVILLE *to the* MARQUIS DE LAUSANNE.

THE sum that you want, you may command of me, dear Marquis, without giving up the noble sear of

Clarencè. Had I known that Madame De Lauſanne was tenderly attached to it, I ſhould never have ſpoken to you on the ſubject of ſelling it. Do me the favour to make me your banker on this occaſion—you have unlimitted credit.

You cannot doubt my friendſhip for you--ſuffer me therefore, dear Lauſanne, to caution you againſt the arts of Le Blanc. She knows perhaps that D' Elbeu will always win — and that your generous temper will never ſuſpect how he ſhould do ſo—I however, who am not blinded by infatuation, can eaſily ſee into her ſorrow—and can doubt the Chevalier's honour. Madame De Lauſanne—ah, my God, Marquis, what a woman, to be expoſed to a pang when

a little

a little prudence and an exertion of common sense on your part, could save her from ever feeling one!

Farewel, do not be offended—if I did not love you, Le Blanc and D' Elben might ruin you without my offering to interfere—and I might possess Clarence.

I am

Much Yours,

HENRY DE MONTMELLE

To Monsieur DE MONTVILLE.

YOUR friendship is too apprehensive sir—your offer too generous!

If you choose to have Clarencè, let me have your answer—if not—I cannot want for it a purchaser. I am, sir,

Your Obedient,

Humble Servant,

DE LAUSANNE.

To

To the Marquis DE LAUSANNE.

NO, my dear Marquis, I cannot consent to possess Clarencè at the expence of Madame De Lausanne's tears.—I am a coward where a virtuous woman's sighs are weapons against me, —but I can be brave where those of a courtezan are practiced to deceive.

Adieu! I wish you would accept of my first offer.

Yours ever,

MONTVILLE.

VICTORIA *to* MARIA.

MY dear friend, I am very miserable.--My amiable Maria, who can confole me!—the Marquis is, I fear, almoft ruined—his eftate of Clarence is fold—Monfieur De Montville I heard was to be the purchafer—but he has, I am told, declined it, and the Marquis offered it in my prefence to the Comte De Sablau.—Solignac, who was by, hardly gave the Comte time to anfwer, before he declared himfelf ready to pay down the money for it. Laufanne clofed with the propofal, and Solignac this day compleated the purchafe.

It

It is ſome comfort to me that my friend Solignac is in poſſeſſion of it—ſince Clarencè is no longer mine—I am glad it is his.—What a folly, my Maria!—but alas! I grieve in ſpite of my reaſon.—Ah, Luzy!—every grove—every tree—every flowering ſhrub there, was endeared to me, by your having wandered through all their ſweets—they all can witneſs to thy vows of love and fidelity.—It was the place too of my birth—of the birth of my dear father—the favourite reſidence of my tender mother—the place which was conſecrated to friendſhip by my Maria and her Victoria.—Do you remember the little ruſtic temple at the bottom of the avenue of poplars?—and that alſo embo-

ſomed

fomed in the orange grove?—how often have we liftened in them to the warblings of the thrufh—the complaints of the nightingale—and to the ftill fweeter voices of Lindor and Luzy!—alas, poor Clarencè! — "cruel remembrance — how fhall I appeafe thee!"—I cannot write—I am unfit for any thing.—The Marquis too looks ill— he frets — ah, why does he not act confiftently with reafon!—he has quarrelled it feems with his friend Monfieur De Montville—that grieves him, I believe.—Madame De Sanfcerre fays, De Montville complained to her of his neglect—he talks with affection of him—and affures her the man is in himfelf naturally good—but fpoiled by the imprudence of his

late

late parents indulgence—and by some fatal prejudices which he has imbibed. I honour this Monsieur De Montville —his character is unexceptionably good —I am sorry any difference has happened between them, for it was somewhat easy as long as Lausanne consulted his friendship.—The poor Marquis!—although he treats me unkindly, I am sorry for him.

Madame De Sanscerre has just been with me—she entreats me to go with her to a masked ball, which is to be given this night in Paris. She remarks that it will appear to Lausanne as if I was not displeased or concerned at his disposal of Clarence — she reasons me into the propriety of being seen

there

there by him. She says such constant resignation to his will, must at length open his eyes, and incline him to adopt a different mode of behaviour.—I comply with a heavy heart. Ah, how dreadful is it to assume an appearance so foreign to the real feelings of it!—I will not seal this until my return—but will endeavour to amuse you by a relation of what passes there.

Madame De Sanfoerre chose the habit of a *Paisanne*—I assumed the neat and simple one of a shepherdess—I preferred it for two reasons—the first was, because of its being a character that did not require much wit or vivacity—the second for its being easily put on without an exertion of taste, magnificence,

cence, or ſtudy. Solignac, who engaged Madame De Sanſcerre's hand for the night, equipped himſelf as a gardener—and carried with him his implements, and a baſket of natural and artificial flowers. Our party was large, and we went in about eight o'clock. I was accoſted on my entrance by a maſk who wore a plain white domino—he told me my name, and in a voice I hardly knew.—I paſſed by him without returning him an anſwer.—As ſoon as I was ſeated a devil approached and took me by the hand.

"Come, fair Arcadian," ſaid he, "you and I muſt dance a minuet."

"Excuſe me," cried I, "I have been warned againſt temptation—and

your very appearance forbids me to go with you."

"Ah!" replied he, "I am become harmless—I forsook the lower regions to night in order to steal a glance at innocence—and behold—I am fallen in love with it."

Saying this, he again tendered me his hand, which I accepted, after whispering him "that to the Comte D' A****s I would e'en venture to entrust myself." He answered only by a pressure of my fingers. We began—never did I see such grace but in the form of Luzy.—"Ah! thought I"—I am not mistaken—this is indeed the Comte D' A****s. After we had finished, the applauses of the assembly made me blush

blush though I was under a mask—and the graceful devil kneeled and kissed my hand in presence of them all.

"Where did you steal those charming steps—that air of elegance, pretty maid?" cried an old fat monk as I passed.

"Not from your convent father," replied the devil.

"No—nor from hell, neither," returned the offended priest.

"From heaven only could they be," exclaimed the white domino who had accosted me before; "from heaven only," and he kissed the hem of my garment.

The pretty air of this gallantry struck me, and taking a flower from my nose-

gay, and presenting it to him—I thanked him for his compliment.—He pressed the flower to his lips, and hid it in his bosom.

"I am jealous," said the devil to me in a low voice.

"Oh, fie!" answered I, "when you left hell, you should have forsworn all unamiableness."

"Ah," returned he, "but at the same time I should have made a vow not to have fallen in love with every virtue—and alas! since I have seen you, there is no room in my heart for any thing else, excepting fear and jealousy, which are the inseparable handmaids of that passion with which you have inspired me."

I was

I was about to answer when a nun pulled me by the sleeve.

"Rash girl," exclaimed she, "whence comes thy boldness?—who could conceive that, young and innocent as you appear, you should be attracted by vice—and that in its own rude shape!—The devil to conquer generally assumes the form of Maurice—but Maurice, to captivate, need only, I find, appear as the devil."

"Ah, gentle sister!" cried I—and I took her arm, "is this indeed the Duke De Maurice?"

"It is—it is," answered she, "none but the Duke De Maurice could so well personate the character he has assumed."

The devil laughed.

"Ha,

"Ha, my pretty vestal!" cried he, seizing her hand, "you seem to know the Duke De Maurice better than the duties which that habit should impose on you.—You can tell, I find, how dangerous he is—though the virtues of charity and silence should rebel against so public a declaration."

"I know no more of thee," replied she, "than what some of my frail sex have told me."

"I begin to suspect my innocent nun," whispered he, "that you know as much of the Duke De Maurice as any frail one of them all.—Come, come, who art thou?" and he took her familiarly under the arm.

The witty nun threw him off with an air

of

of satirical coyness, protesting, *that so strange a connection could never take place as that between virtue and vice, not even for a moment.* "What think you father?" demanded she of the fat monk who was at that moment by her elbow.

"Why, daughter," returned he; "my opinion is, that the devil who now stands before us—is but a poor harmless one. —I protest to you, I believe there is more danger in his appearance than in himself, for I observe this fair shepherdess listens to him with attention—a circumstance which could not happen, were he preaching up to her the maxims of iniquity." "Well said, father!" cried the devil; "now, sister, what say you to that?"

"Why,"

"Why," answered she, "that the devil has at length got hold of the priest—and that I must fly for it."—she immediately mixed in the croud, and put an end to their dialogue.

I began now to perceive that it was to a man I hated above all others, I had hitherto been so polite and obliging—the hint was enough—and I avoided him as much as possible for the rest of the evening—his art in affecting the Comte D' A****s voice, had entirely misled me—he certainly did it admirably. The white domino, on observing that I wished to get rid of the accomplished devil, hinted to him, that he had better endeavour to find out the face of the lively nun, adding,

adding, "If I mistake not it is the same who personated a friar some time ago." This succeeded, and he joined amongst the throng, in order to go in search of her. When he left us, this agreeable mask took hold of my hand.

"If I mistake not," said he, "thou art Madame De Lausanne."

"Ah," answered I, "I am sorry you can think so—for it is to that supposition alone I owe all the fine things you have said to me this evening."

"Why," replied he, "it is very true that I have taken you for the prettiest woman I ever saw—but I cannot presume to say she is the most beautiful I may yet see—therefore if you are not her—in pity to my wishes, slip aside

for one moment your mask—and if your face corresponds with the charms of your person—I shall at least have it in my power to declare that I have beheld Madame De Lausanne's equal—until then—I must own that I never have."

"After that," cried I, "it is impossible for me to grant your request—I am not handsome—my figure is the best of me—my face would destroy the favourable impression it has made on you, were I to indulge your curiosity. But pray, who are you? I never before heard your voice—and will acknowledge I can form of your face no idea. —You are not the Chevalier De Mondonoir?"

"Do you wish me to say yes?" demanded

manded he. "I do not care about it," returned I.

"Well then," resumed the mask, "I give you my honour I am not even acquainted, so as to converse, with the Chevalier.—I am a stranger to you I believe—however, if you wish to see my face I will indulge you—could I but obtain such a promise from you."

"Since you are so polite, you shall have it," replied I, "come with me to that side board yonder, and I will slip aside my mask in order to take some orgeat."

As I spoke this, I took Madame De Sanscerre by the arm, and as we approached the table, told her of my intention to shew myself—and my curio-

ſity to know who he was. She was anxious as to that particular herſelf—for ſhe had heard many wonder who it could be. The maſk ſeemed tranſported at my condeſcenſion, and hurried us through the croud in order to arrive at the wiſhed for corner. When we got there, he filled two glaſſes of orgeat for Madame De Sanſcerre and myſelf. We took out our handkercheifs to apply them to our faces, inſtead of the maſks, which for the conveniency of drinking we were about to remove; before I untied mine I aſked if I might depend upon his ſatisfying my curioſity after I had gratified his?

"To doubt it," replied the Domino, "were to ſuſpect my honor!—but to convince

convince you that my intention is not to deceive, I will ſhew myſelf before I can even have an opportunity to repent of doing ſo—for to confeſs the truth, did I not think you were really the Marchioneſs De Lauſanne, I ſhould not, I believe, have made you ſuch a promiſe."

So ſaying he took off with inimitable grace the vizor that had concealed his fine countenance—and who do you imagine ſtood before me?—no other than the Comte D' Artois himſelf.—I was now exceedingly embarraſſed—and was almoſt aſhamed, after the fine things I had heard him ſay of me, to part with my maſk—however it would have been acting ungenerouſly to have done other-

wife: that idea determined me.—I took the orgeat with a trembling hand—and with the other I withdrew the piece of silk which covered my face. He seized my hand and pressing it to his bosom exclaimed, "charming creature! was it possible to have mistaken for one moment that shape—that air!"

I will now own to you my weakness, my dear Maria, and acknowledge that I was chagrined at finding it to be any other than the Marquis De Palmene; who has disappeared since the departure of his friend Luzy. Some say he is gone to Italy—others declare they have lately met him in Paris, though they did not speak to him. Solignac, who should best know, tells me he is not in

France

France—that his conduct has of late been mysterious to him—that he resides, he believes, chiefly in Italy— that he has never learned so however from himself—for in his letters he only says he has abjured France till Luzy's return to it—if that should ever happen, he will see it again with transport—until then, he shall be bound to no place in particular—but will consider himself as a citizen of the world. All this I knew —yet I must confess a delusive hope had charmed my breast — and every word the Comte D'Artois uttered, I thought resembled the Marquis's peculiar elegant method of expression. — The idea of conversing with one who had seen Luzy, even on board the vessel

which carried him from France—the hope of hearing that his laſt words were "Adieu Victoria!"—his laſt ſighs were ſent forth towards her—yes, my friend, I will own my weakneſs—and that I merited the diſappointment I had met with.

The Comte D'Artois had managed the diſcovery ſo well, that nobody was the wiſer but the parties themſelves reſpecting any thing that had paſſed—and we joined our ſet again, without their having the leaſt ſuſpicion of our real errand to the ſide board. The Comte was more than ever charmed with me—he never quitted me for the night—he made love to me—but it was not with an air of inſolent confidence

—the

—the expreſſions he choſe, were delicate and timid—and what would paſs as mere gallantry.—You may be ſure I affected to receive them as ſuch, though in every ſyllable that fell from his lips, I could perceive the agitations of a wounded heart.

Our attention was now drawn to a corner of the room, from whence we heard loud peals of laughter, and beheld an immenſe croud gathered—we drew near to them, and by ſingular good fortune got into the very thickeſt of the throng, were we learned without enquiry the cauſe of this partial aſſemblage. The nun was in a cloſe converſation with the devil; the ſpirit of which, had attracted numbers: amongſt the

reſt, a graceful Turk and an elegant Sultana, came thither to obſerve what was going on—we had taken our ſtands juſt before they appeared; and heard the nun ſay, "Well, Monſieur le Diable, you have left hell for very little purpoſe if your intention was to carry me back with you!—What may be my fate ſometime hence indeed, I know not—but this I am certain of—I will mortify more than ever in order to avoid you in the next world."

"Why," cried he, taking her hand, "you have not hitherto been very deaf to my perſuaſions—It was by my inſtigation you put on this veil—it was by my advice you aſſumed this becoming habit—and it is now by my command

that

that you shew the beauties of your face."—So saying, he caught her in his arms, and was going to throw back her veil, when the Comte D'Artois interposed.

"Never, by heaven!" exclaimed he, "Avaunt thou evil projector!—this lady claims a superior power, which will protect her from your insolence." The Turk, who had heard with pleasure the devil's intention to discover the nun, stepped forth to answer the Comte.

"And pray," said he haughtily, "why should any power prevent a lady's being admired?—devil execute your work—dazzle the room with the brightness of those eyes,—which that envious

veil conceals from our admiration." The nun went up to the grand signior.

"Lord of the east, said she, most mighty Soliman—before whose throne all nations bow—and at whose frown the magnanimous tremble! thy slave, kissing the dust of thy feet, owns herself an atom when compared to thee: —Is it, because thou desirest to make me a foil to thy bright Sultana, who in fairness exceeds the children of the east—and whose beauties are richer than the jewels of thy crown?—ah, mighty Sultan!" added she with inimitable humour, "suffer thy slave to be covered in thy presence—for whose charms can equal those of the virtuous

Le

Le Blanc's?"—here the assembly shouted with mirth—and the haughty Sultan appeared—as if he wished himself a thousand leagues off.

"Or suppose," cried she briskly, after a pause of some moments, "suppose I (forgetting for one night only my religious habit) should personate Delia the singer!—I will call for a theorbo and drown your senses in a flood of harmony—then poor Elmira," said she, addressing herself to the sumptuous Sultana, "then will you be forgotten!—and after that to make my conquest more sure—I will assume with Roxalana's wit all her caprices—all her pride; then," turning again to the suffering favourite "then, poor Elmira,

you

you will be lost indeed!" the Sultan took her hand and kissing it, "you are already" said he, "a Roxalana—you have humbled my eastern pride—forget—forgive! your veil shall be worn as you please—and I promise never to offend again."

"Ha!" cried she, "and is that all you promise?—Come, come—I must have a little conversation with you in private—I know you very well—perhaps I aspire to be loved by you!—were you not indeed a married man, I might be tempted to break through the walls of a cloister, and find a shelter under your majestic wing.—But as that can never be, you need not fear to trust yourself for a few moments with

me

me alone." He assured her that she had only to name her place and hour, and that he would be punctual to both. She whispered him—he bowed.

"And now," exclaimed she, "good folks, it is time for me to absent myself from a scene of dissipation which nothing but the hope of making converts could have allured me to—If I have succeeded even with *one*, I shall be recompensed for my pious labour—if I can change *one* heart, I am satisfied."—As this was evidently meant as a flattering compliment to the Sultan, it was received with applause.—"As for this poor devil," cried she, "even let him escape to those regions where he learned his first precepts—and where

he

he is only fit to live—let him, however, carry with him this moral truth as a ſentiment which he may give the ton to amongſt his companions: that, to a woman of virtue, nothing is more inſupportable than the perſeverance of addreſſes which cannot end with honour—and to even a woman of gallantry, mirth is always unpleaſing unleſs checked by decency and humanity. —It is to this gentleman, "added ſhe, curtyſing gracefully to the Comte D' Artois "that I am indebted for not being known to the whole aſſembly—a circumſtance that muſt have pained a female not totally loſt to modeſty and feeling."—As ſhe finiſhed, ſhe ruſhed amongſt the croud—and it was

owing

owing to an accident that I saw her again before I left the rooms.

Madame De Sanscerre and I stepped into a retired one to take off our masks, and to refresh ourselves with the cool air that came in at a window. We had not been there long, when we heard some voices in the next apartment to us—and as I thought I was acquainted with the female ones, we looked through a curtain which separated the two rooms, and there beheld the nun and the Turk together, in deep conference.—And who, my dear Maria, do you think their bare faces discovered them to be? no others than the Marquis De Lausanne and Madame La Bert?—Madame La Bert!—I was all amazement—yet

so

so it really was. They seemed to be making up old differences—she wept and lamented her weakness—but love — all conquering love! — prostituted word!

"We have the luck of it!" said Madame De Sanscerre, retiring with rage from the curtain.

"We have indeed!" replied I calmly and threw myself into a chair.

"We discovered their intrigue in the same manner," continued she.

"And we will forgive them at this moment, my dear Sanscerre," cried I —and I rested my aching head on her shoulder.

I will tell you no more, my dear Maria of our nights adventures, for

there

there are no more incidents worth relating—only this—that Solignac discovered in the dress of a gardener a passion for a fair *Païsanne*, whom he politely said was always too much his superior until that evening, to suffer him to reveal it before—but she looked so rustic—so simple—so condescending in this humble garb, that she inspired him with courage to lay open to her, the precious secret. Adieu, my Maria! I am more yours than I can express.

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE.

Madame

Madame LA BERT *to the Marquis* DE LAUSANNE.

THE declaration you made me laſt night, Marquis, has given new charms to the world—has added additional horrors to a convent. In burying myſelf in ſolitude I aſſumed an air of penitence—I bewailed to all whoſe charity brought them to viſit me, my former indiſcretions—I wept over paſt errors—but owned to no one except your wife, the criminality of my connection with you: her piercing eyes were not to be deceived—her religion—her piety induced her from that in-

ſtant

ſtant to compaſſionate and befriend me. It is from her countenance I hope to retrieve my character--It is from her unſuſpecting nature I mean to enjoy thoſe pleaſures, which the cruel breath of ſcandal deprived me of for a while. I have written to her—I have told her of my intention to appear again in the world. I have attributed to the innocent gaiety of my heart, a diſlike to the unſocial confinement of a convent. I have prayed her to believe me not leſs ſenſible of my former unhappy weakneſs — but determined, with the aſſiſtance of her friendſhip, to partake of the charms of a virtuous and harmleſs ſociety. I have taken a houſe in the place royale, and have abated nothing

thing in its taſte of my former magnificence. I ſhall ſup at home to-morrow night, Marquis.—Come to me—I promiſe to mention nothing of Le Blanc—the ſubject gives you pain—fear nothing of it from me — you have a capacious ſoul—give me at leaſt a ſhare in it—if I ſteal more be ſurprized—but regret not the ſoft power with which I ſhall enſlave you.

LA BERT.

To Madame LA BERT.

THE invitation of a Venus has charms—but when the wit of Minerva pens it what man can reſiſt its eloquence?—I come, Madam—I obey your

your ſummons—prepare for me a wreath of love—at your feet ſhall you encircle me with it.

DE LAUSANNE.

VICTORIA *to* MARIA.

THE Marquis propoſed our making a party to go to his ſeat of Trois Riviere--I immediately aſſented to it, and invited with him almoſt all the gay and elegant young people of faſhion in Paris to accompany us. The caſtle is large, and its ſituation is moſt romantically beautiful. A pavilion has been erected in the centre of a thick wood, under which we have had the moſt rural and delightful enter-

entertainments. A rotunda in the manner of Engliſh Ranelagh (which Lauſanne often talks of with rapture) has been built on a riſing hill at a ſmall diſtance from the caſtle at the foot of which is an enamelled plain of a vaſt extent. This rotunda is elegantly fitted up, and we have concerts and balls alternately there. Every perſon ſeems happy—every perſon is really ſo, but your poor diſcontented Victoria. She with her friend Sanſcerre frequently ſteal a ſolitary walk, during which I indulge thoſe tears which flow from the very centre of a ſorrowing heart.

The Comte D'Artois has honoured us with his preſence—his wit enlivens all—but his particular gallantries diſ-

treſs

tresſ *me*. The Duke De Maurice has not been invited—he was not in Paris when we left it — elſe the Marquis would certainly have remembered him in the general invitation.

Would you believe that Madame La Bert has written me an hypocritical penitential letter, deploring her paſt faults —declaring a natural antipathy to a conventual life—and praying my protection and countenance in her ſecond appearance in the world? my anſwer was ſhort and civil, aſſuring her I was grieved for her paſt miſconduct—and hoping a reformation of her manners —that my friendſhip could now be no longer ſerviceable to her, and that her own prudence would be her beſt

guide and protection.—The Marquis is very polite towards me—but that is all. He often goes to Paris, as he says, on particular business — during which time he leaves Solignac *Maître de Logis*. As it is our plan that no ceremony should be used, and that all should pursue their different inclinations, his going from his guests is not considered as a breach of politeness, but as an example of the freedom every other person should use: besides, he calls himself only a visitor of mine—and assures his company that he was invited by me with the rest of the gentlemen whom I favoured with a summons, to be of this rural party. Unfortunate man!—he will, no doubt, see his absurdities

ſurdities when it is too late to amend them—he will repent of his credulity when he can believe no longer.—I weep over his errors, and pray for his converſion.

Madame De Sanſcerre and Solignac are happy lovers. Her former huſband's ill-treatment has not diſguſted her from wearing the matrimonial chain. They are both lively—they are both handſome—and they are at once the delight and envy of the world. They dance, they ſing together—a ſimilarity of diſpoſition renders them always agreeable to each other—and the ſmall ſhare of coquetry that runs through her compoſition, keeps at the ſame time his fears and love alive. I would ſay they were

formed for each other, had I not often pronounced the ſame of a miſerable pair, who ſeemed to be as near happineſs—but cruel fate divided them for ever. Ah, my Maria! when in the woods of Clarencè, I liſtened to thoſe pure and delightful ſentiments which flowed from the lips of Luzy—when my own boſom felt and approved all that they uttered—when a ſmiling father and an indulgent mother looked with complacency on our mutual paſſion—did I not then ſay Luzy was born for his Victoria alone?—Ah did not my hard deſtiny ſoon tear me from his arms—and condemn me to Lauſanne's!—Remembrance, remembrance—thou art too painful!

I was

I was weeping over a ſtring of pearl which Luzy had preſented me with in happier days—I had recalled the graces to my imagination which played around his perſon, when he with a gallant and tender air, tied it on my arm—I pictured to myſelf his ſmile—I beheld him drop on one knee before me—I there heard him pour forth a renewal of the fondeſt—the moſt faithful vows—my heart caught the flame which fancy had kindled—and forgetful of my huſband, I dared to preſs the ſenſeleſs beads to my lips. I was in a ſummer-houſe alone, and did not ſuppoſe any mortal was witneſs to my tears and weakneſs. "Ah!" exclaimed I, "where art thou my beſt beloved?—where doſt

thou wander a prey to anxiety and despair?—too unfortunate Victoria—her fate has involved thee in wretchedness!"

Here I paused to raise again the bracelet to my lips—but reflecting on the cruel ceremony which had bound me to the Marquis—I flung it from me, and it fell before me on the ground.

"What am I about?" cried I almost dispossessed of reason. "Oh, Lauzanne—oh, virtue—pardon me!"

At that moment I heard a rustling, and quicker than thought the Comte D'Artois stood in my presence—I was shocked—I was confused—I was frightened almost to fainting. He beheld my agonies, and fell at my feet.

"Lovely Madame De Lauzanne!"

cried

cried he in a tremulous tone, "fear nothing—It is true I am not your *confident*—yet I profess myself your friend. It is true I am not a favoured lover—but if he that is so happy as to possess your heart, is now a wanderer in France—my protection shall save him from deserving that appellation in future—I will have him placed about my person in favour and magnificence. Tell me his name, I beseech you, Madam, and let his absence cost you no more tears."

"Ah, my Lord," replied I, "you widely mistake—I weep not his absence but my own weakness—I am married to another—I ought not to reflect on him with pleasure—but, alas! I have

been accuſtomed to regard him from my childhood—and he has many virtues. He has left France—I ſhall never ſee him more—and I wiſh not to ſee him—all I deſire is to blot from my remembrance his image."

Here I wept upon the Comte's ſhoulder, who had thrown a ſupporting arm around me, and was mingling tears with mine. He begged to hear the ſtory—I declined relating it — I had no inclination to expoſe my huſband—on the contrary I blamed my own ingratitude in weeping at the idea of a former lover, when ſo amiable a man as the Marquis deſerved all my affection. The Comte ſhook his head—I pretended to take no notice of his incredulity.

credulity. I prayed him to keep the secret which chance and my folly had discovered; and disengaging myself from him, I left the summer-house with precipitation. When I got to my apartment, I found Madame De Sanscerre in it—I threw myself into a chair, and in an agony of tears, I told her what had happened—

"It would have been ridiculous," cried I, "to have denied it after all he had heard—the only way I had left was to make him my friend."

Madame De Sanscerre was very angry with me—she said that I behaved like a child—that the Comte had gained from me a very precious secret, which so far from destroying his hopes as a

lover, would rather inspire new and more daring ones.

"Ah, my God!" exclaimed I, "how wretched am I!—what will become of me at last!"

My friend then began to console me—she spoke reason in its most persuasive language—she made me confess that I was both weak and culpable in suffering Luzy to become once more an object of my meditations. I blushed—I acknowledged her justice—Luzy was again to be banished from my idea—but that task to you, I must confess, I never can accomplish. After this she left me to go and make her toilette.

As soon as I was alone, I recollected my string of pearls—more valuable

from

from its being a gift of Lucy's, than from its own costly worth. I desired Nannette to go to the summer-house and look for my bracelet—she flew—and returned with an assurance that it was not there. I was almost distracted. "Ah," thought I, "it was the only token I ever kept of his love—that smile—that air with which it was presented!—ah, my heedless folly!—how could I abandon this innocent pledge of the most precious affection!"

I wept, I lamented myself in vain.

The hour approached when I was obliged to join my company in the saloon, and I endeavoured to assume a more composed countenance than the real situation of my heart could well

allow of. As I entered the room where every one was assembled but the Comte D'Artois, the Chevalier De Mondonoir approached and led me to a seat, then hanging over my chair, said to me in a low voice, "Why, Madam, do you appear pensive? — something has happened to give you uneasiness! — could I—ah, charming Marchioness! — could Mondonoir be of any service to you—tax freely my poor power—I live but in the hope of making myself one time or other worthy of your esteem."

The Chevalier, I believe, imagined, that I was unhappy about a new run of ill luck which has pursued Lausanne: he lost to an English nobleman yesterday in Paris, five thousand pounds;

and

and went thither again this day to discharge the debt of honour.—I will not stay my pen to animadvert upon so disagreeable a subject—alas! it is to no purpose!—so I will proceed in my story.

I answered the Chevalier in a tone of sprightliness which amazed him, and at once delivered me from being suspected of melancholy on any account.

We went to dinner—the Comte D'Artois did not appear—he was not to be found—at the concert he was still absent—at supper he was not present—and every body concluded that he had left Trois Riviere. When we were parting for the night, I took Madame De Sanscerre by the arm, and as the moon shone very bright, I proposed to

her

her a walk in the wood—she liked the thought, and we sallied forth. We had not advanced far into it before I perceived some one dart through a different part of it, as if to shun our society—the circumstance suprised—nay, alarmed us, and we paused for a few moments—however we could not prevail on ourselves to proceed further, and we returned to the castle where I took leave of Madame De Sanscerre; and walked for some time up and down a gallery which is covered on the top, but is open at the sides, and goes half round the house. I had not been there long, when I heard some steps sounding in the gallery—I could not discover whose they were, for I was quite at

the

the other end of it, and they seemed approaching, but at some distance. From the softness of the tread, I guessed the person to be Sanscerre, who perhaps had looked into my chamber, and was uneasy at not finding me there. Prepossessed with this idea, I waited the coming of my friend, but what was my amazement, when instead of her, I beheld the Comte D'Artois! it was the way to his apartment—that gallery conducted him into a suite of rooms, at the end of which was situated his bed chamber—it was there he meant to retire, when he was struck with my unexpected appearance.

"Good God, Madam!" cried he, "do I dream—or is it really the figure

of Madame De Lauſanne that I now behold?"

I was in ſome confuſion at his finding me ſo ſtrangely alone at ſuch an hour, and in ſuch a place, but anſwered him with compoſure and a degree of gravity, which ſerved to check that air of vivacity and joy, which appeared in his manner on firſt addreſſing me. I took my leave almoſt directly—but not without aſking him for the ſtring of pearls, which I had left by accident in the ſummer-houſe, and which I flattered myſelf he had found. He took my hand—ſighed upon it—and exclaimed, "Ah, Madam! thoſe pearls—that happy man!—Madame De Lauſanne—lovely Victoria, name him to me!"

"My

"My Lord," cried I, "this is ungenerous—if I discovered to you the weakness of my soul, you may perhaps be ignorant, that I have virtue sufficient to despise that weakness. Name this subject no more, my Lord—I loved long before I knew the Marquis—I never, since my marriage, allowed my imagination to dwell even on the virtues of this amiable man. Those pearls which my woman had accidentally placed on my toilette, brought him once more to my idea—I remembered him with too much esteem—but it was for the last time.—Never can I again be guilty of so much ingratitude to the excellent Lausanne — blot it for ever from your memory, good my

Lord

Lord—and think justly of my virtue."

I immediately flew from him, and hurried to my chamber. This morning I received from him the following billet, which enclosed my bracelet.

To the Marchioness DE LAUSANNE.

YOUR last words were—"think justly of my virtue." Too charming Victoria I honour—I esteem that virtue which ever must be a barrier to my hopes.—I have loved you—I here resign that tenderness — your bosom is filled by another object more amiable — more worthy your regard—the bracelet which

I saw

I ſaw you honour with a fond embrace I now return—I have embraced it too—I have ſhed ſome fond—ſome parting tears on every bead — they had touched your lips! you muſt in theſe lines ſuffer me to make my adieus—I can fly from your charms—but I cannot ſtay without adoring them. I beg leave to kiſs your hands."

I need not add that he has left Trois Riviere—and left it without aſking to ſee me. Madame De Sanſcerre rallies a good deal upon it, and pretends to be very angry that the moſt agreeable man of the party ſhould be frightened from us. Solignac looks grave upon this; and enquires not into the cauſe of his departure, though he is

quite

quite out of the ſecret, and Sanſcerre ſays this is to torment him.

Madame de Sanſcerre has purchaſed a little eſtate near this place, whither ſhe has invited all my company to paſs a few days. — I ſhall ſteal home alone this night however, in order to enjoy ſome hours of peace and ſolitude.— The Marquis I expect too from Paris — and he muſt not be left alone. Adieu.

Yours ever,

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE.

END OF VOLUME I.